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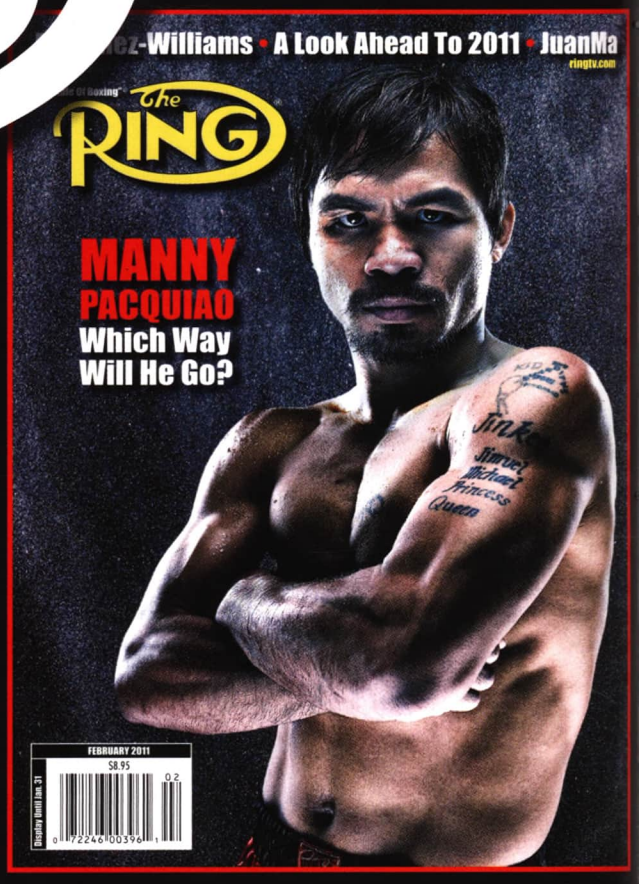

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Star Power!

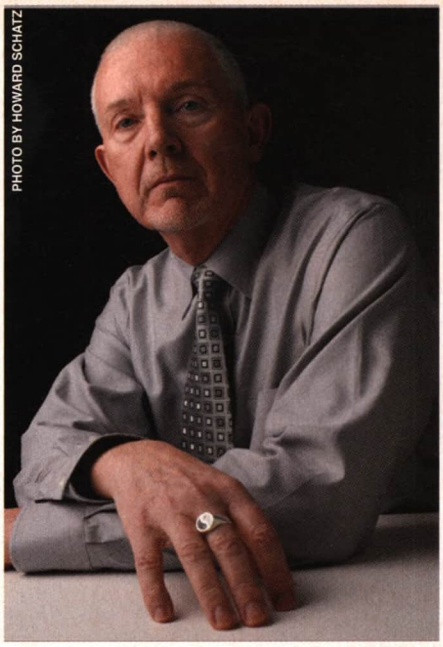
PHOTO BY HOWARD SCHATZ

The first time the "All-Star Report Cards" appeared in THE RING was the September 2003 issue. In the ensuing eight years, it has grown into an annual event, a way of evaluating fighters that looks beyond the ring and also grades their marketability, support system, and growth potential. But more than anything else, they have to be stars, albeit stars in a strictly boxing sense, but stars nonetheless.

Of the 20 boxers on the original list, only two have stayed on top long enough to still be included this year—Bernard Hopkins and Floyd Mayweather.

Back in '03, today's biggest star, Manny Pacquiao, didn't make the cut. His breakthrough knockout of Marco Antonio Barrera didn't come until later that year. Since 2005, however, Manny has been an all-star mainstay and figures to remain one for a while yet.

But not even B-Hop can go on forever. In fact, only eight of the fighters graded this year are under 30.

The young bloods are Andre Ward, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., Saul Alvarez, Amir Khan, Brandon Rios, Yuriorkis Gamboa, Nonito Donaire, and Giovani Segura. All of them are talented fighters to one degree or another and fun to watch. But do any of them have what it takes to be another Pacquiao?

Chavez Junior is better than we originally thought, but not *that* good, and, unless I miss my guess, Alvarez is probably only a notch or two better—good but not great.

You've got to love Rios and Segura, two stone-cold assassins willing to wade through hell to batter their opposition into defeat. But their styles are not normally conducive to longevity, and, most likely, the best we can hope for is a handful of electrifying years.

Gamboa has a lot going for him—speed, punching power, rapidly improving boxing skills—and he could dominate the featherweight division for some time to come. But the last Cuban fighter to become a crossover star in the US was Kid Gavilan, back in the 1950s. It won't be easy for "The Guantanamo Cyclone" to equal the wildly popular "Cuban Hawk."

That brings us to the three most likely candidates, Ward, Khan, and Donaire.

Ward has to get by Carl Froch first, which is not a given, but, if he does, a bright future beckons. Still, whether or not his classy boxing and clean-cut image will be enough to make him a box-office success beyond the Bay Area is uncertain.

Khan is beginning to live up to expectations, and Freddie Roach will undoubtedly bring out the best in him. Even so, the breathtaking spark of genius so easily discernable in Pacquiao and Mayweather has yet to surface and conceivably never will.

In terms of sheer talent, Donaire jumps out as the most complete package, the one with the best chance of being a truly great fighter. He's also charismatic and photogenic, which never hurts. The only drawbacks are his size and perhaps, in a weird way, the fact he is a Filipino. It's going to take a while to replace Pacquiao in the hearts of his people, and, regardless of how good Donaire turns out to be and how much he accomplishes, following an icon of Pac-Man's stature is always a daunting task.

Perhaps the next savior isn't one of the above. Maybe he's like Pacquiao back in 2003, waiting in the wings, ready to pick up the baton and run a good long way with it, pulling the rest of the sport along with him.

But come what may, the best place to spot the next superstar is almost certainly in THE RING's All-Star Report Cards.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

The Ring

Volume 90, No. 11
November 2011

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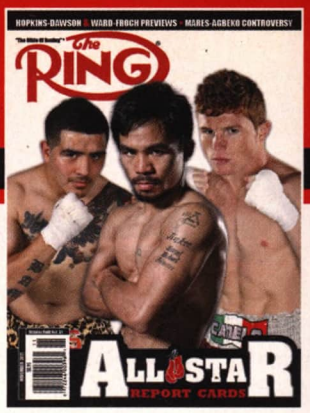
comeoutwriting@sepublications.com

The Ring (ISSN: 0035-5410), Vol. 90, No. 11 (November 2011), is published monthly by Sports and Entertainment Publications, LLC, 510 Township Line Rd., Suite 130, Blue Bell, PA 19422. Periodicals postage paid at Blue Bell, PA 19422, and additional post offices. Postmaster: Send change of address notices to: The Ring, P.O. Box 433122, Palm Coast, FL 32164-3122. Single copy price $8.95 in U.S. and Canada (€4.95 in U.K.). Subscription price $107.40 in the U.S., $140.40 in Canada and Mexico, $197.40 in remaining countries. Not responsible for the loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage. The entire contents of this magazine are copyright ©2011 Sports and Entertainment Publications, LLC. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. All rights reserved. Publisher is not responsible for the accuracy or content of any advertisements appearing in this magazine, nor the delivery or quality of merchandise or services offered. No endorsement of any such advertisement is intended or implied. Advertisers and agencies assume liability for claims arising from the content of their advertisements. FOR ADVERTISING INQUIRIES AND RATES: (213) 233-2952. U.S. and Canadian distribution by Kable Distribution Services Inc., 14 Wall Street, Suite 4C, New York, NY 10022. International distribution by Worldwide Media Service Inc., 115 East 23rd St., New York, NY 10010, U.K. distribution by Comag Tavistock Rd., West Drayton, Middlesex UB77QE, England.

Printed in U.S.A.

The RING NOVEMBER 2011



Brandon Rios by **Jan Sanders**
Manny Pacquiao by **Landry Major/Getty Images**
Saul Alvarez by **Tom Hogan/Hogan Photos/GBP**

Cover Design by **David Romanosky**

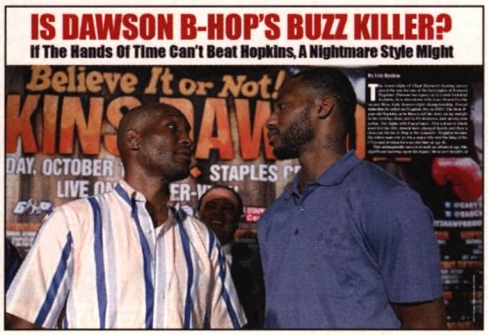
FEATURES

33 ALL-STAR REPORT CARD

Grading Boxing's Elite

"Put aside the problems within the sport, the bum decisions, the poor officiating, the ridiculous behavior of the alphabet organizations, and instead consider the vast, colorful array of fighters out there to enjoy. It's a good feeling."

By Don Stradley



54 IS DAWSON B-HOP'S BUZZ KILLER?

If The Hands Of Time Can't Beat Hopkins, A Nightmare Style Might

"And why is Dawson getting that chance? Because Hopkins' hands were tied. In order to get his rematch with Pascal, "The Executioner" had to sign a document stating that if he won, he'd fight Dawson next."

By Eric Raskin

62 A GOOD FIGHT RUINED!

A Sad Tale Of Incompetence And Controversy

"The fight couldn't miss. So long as the two of them made it to the ring and weren't besieged by a swarm of locusts or frogs falling from the sky or some other such Biblical disaster, everything would come together nice and tidy, and we all would go to bed afterward feeling good about our beleaguered sport. And then along came Russell Mora, and everything went to hell."

By William Dettloff

70 THE RING INTERVIEW: BRANDON RIOS

"Fans Love The Way I Fight"

"Rios spoke about his ongoing blood feud with Victor Ortiz, his upbringing, the lessons he's learned in life, the controversial joke he made about Freddie Roach's Parkinson's disease, his Garden City, Kansas, roots, and his unbending devotion to his trainer Garcia and manager Cameron Dunkin."

By Joseph Santoliquito

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PHOTO BY BOB LEVEY/GETTY IMAGES

WHAT KIND OF GRADES DID CANELO GET?
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COME OUT WRITING

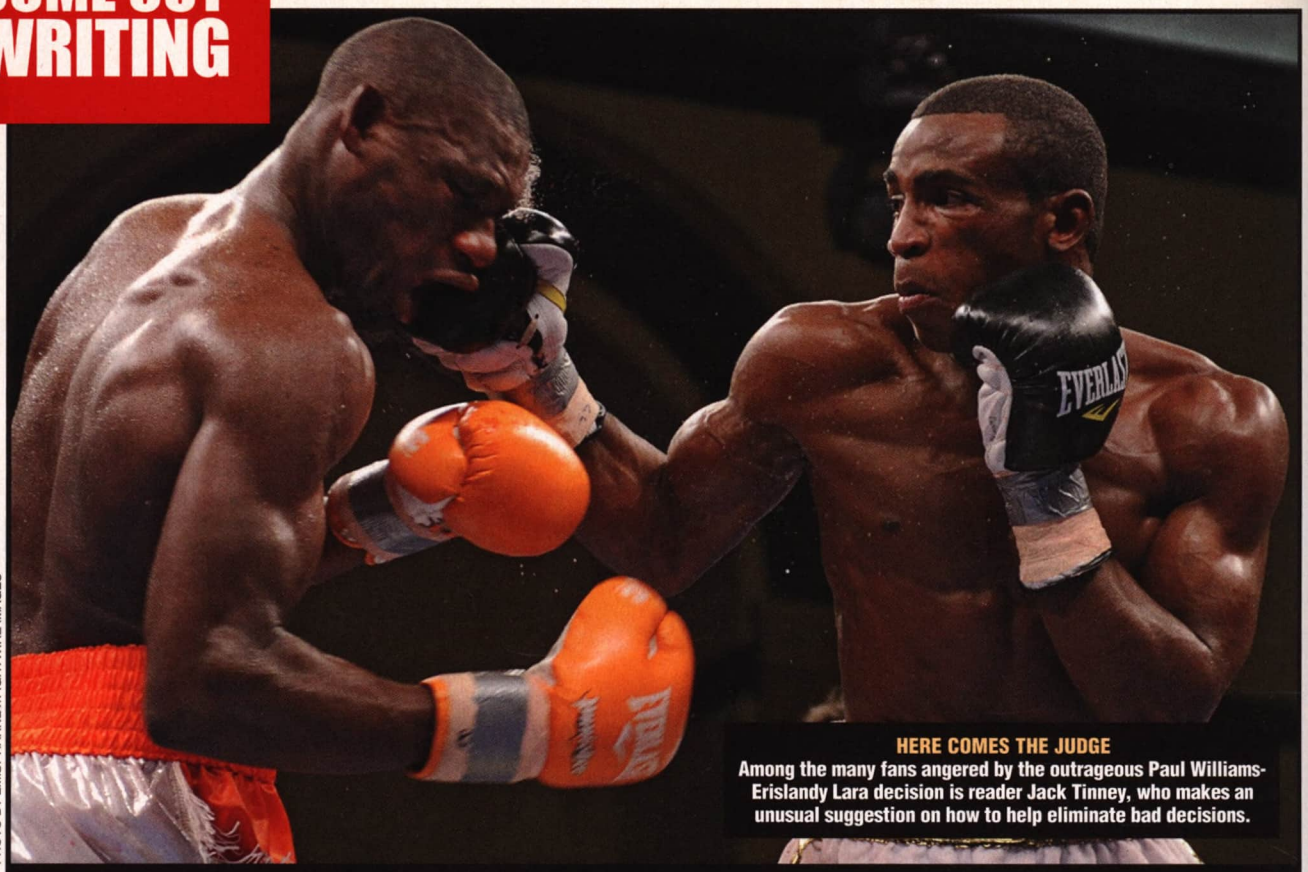


PHOTO BY EMILY HARNEY/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

HERE COMES THE JUDGE
Among the many fans angered by the outrageous Paul Williams-Erislandy Lara decision is reader Jack Tinney, who makes an unusual suggestion on how to help eliminate bad decisions.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Could This Work?

I can't be the only one who has thought of this, but why can't there be five judges at every professional fight card, one on each side of the ring and the referee inside the ropes? In diving competitions, it works very well. The lowest and the highest scores are dropped. I'm sure this could help eliminate "home cooking," as Teddy Atlas puts it. Moreover, no judge should ever have any connection to the promoter of the event or any hometown judges employed. This could eliminate the big-ticket fighters who have a bad night from getting the nod because they generate more interest. It might also help if more retired boxers were hired as judges.

Yes, I'm referring to Paul Williams' controversial decision over Cuban Erislandy Lara in Atlantic City. Lara would have had a better chance with the slot machines. The New Jersey commission said the three blind judges should get further training, and I agree. But in synchronized swimming!

JACK TINNEY
Wynnewood, PA

Joey's Statue

I am the widow of former middleweight champion Joey Giardello. I saw the picture of the Joey Giardello statue (created by sculptor Carl LeVotch) in the September 2011 issue of THE RING. Even though my family and I have seen the statue since its inception and attended the unveiling, it was an honor to see the photo of it in THE RING. During his career, Joey was on many RING magazine covers, but the coverage of his statue in the September issue has given me the most pride and pleasure. Thanks for remembering a great champion and an even greater family man.

ROSALIE TILELLI (GIARDELLO)
Cherry Hill, NJ

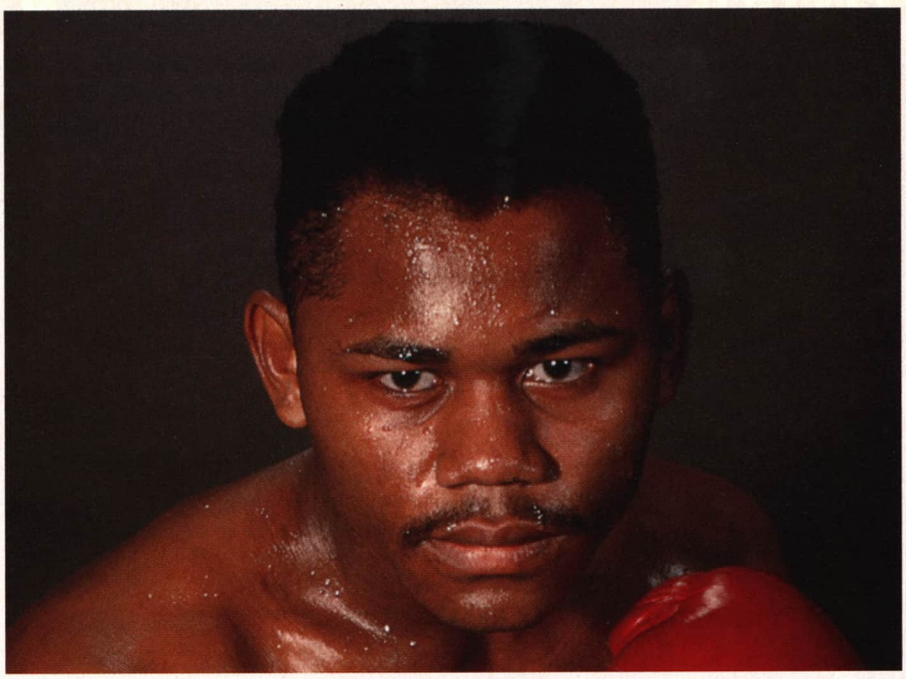
Speedy And Morris

Kudos to THE RING's Senior Writer, William Dettloff, for giving honorable mention to Filipino boxer Speedy Dado ("The 10 Greatest Filipino Fighters Of All-Time," August 2011 issue). With a mixed record variously reported as 83-42-14 or 90-42-14, Speedy Dado was no Manny Pacquiao. But he was still a star, billed as the "Manila Machine Gunner," who mowed down formidable fighters such as Chato Laredo and Ray Montoya at the famed Hollywood Legion Stadium. An idol in the "Little Manila" enclave in Los Angeles, Speedy Dado cut a striking figure with his pomaded hair and tailored suits. Sadly, his career ended in 1940 after losing an eye,but the Hollywood legend (who died in 1990) lives on in the 2003 documentary, *The Great Pinoy Boxing Era*, produced by Corky Pasqui.

LES HAMMER
Pasadena, CA

As a young American girl who grew up in the Philippines in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when my parents were stationed at Clark Air Force Base, I was able to watch boxing with my older brother. This allowed me to follow the likes of Luisito Espinosa and even the Hawaii-based Jesus Salud. So it was with great interest that I read William Dettloff's list of the top inactive Filipino boxers. I was surprised not to see Morris East make honorable mention. He held the WBA junior welterweight title, becoming one of the youngest titleholders ever. East also won THE RING's 1991 Knockout of the Year. I thought that would be enough to at least garner honorable mention.

TAMMY ERICKSEN
Chapel Hill, NC



MISSING MORRIS
Readers Les Hammer and Tammy Ericksen both wrote to comment on Williams Dettloff's "The 10 Greatest Filipino Fighters Of All-Time" section, which appeared in the August 2011 issue. Les was delighted Speedy Dado made Honorable Mention, while Tammy was surprised Morris East (pictured) didn't make the cut.

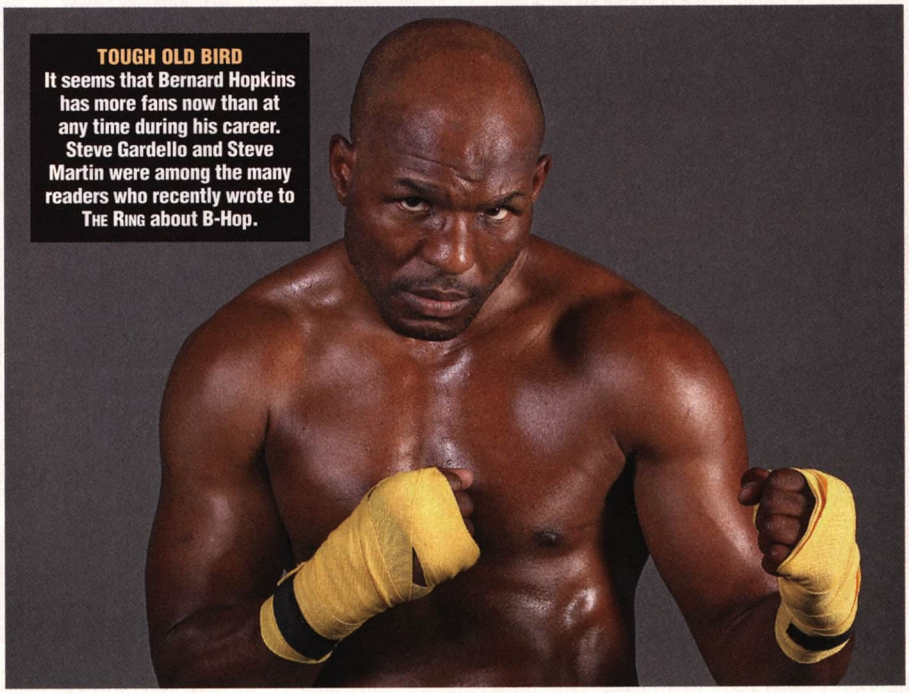
All About B-Hop

It is hard to believe what Bernard Hopkins has done in recent years. In an age of instant gratification, you don't see that kind of dedication anymore. He is Marciano-like in his dedication and training. Even those who do not like him have to like what he has meant to the sport of boxing. In this respect, he has achieved immortality.

STEVE GARDELLO
Brockton, MA

In the August 2011 issue of THE RING, Floyd Mayweather and Manny Pacquiao were criticized for not fighting the hardest possible fights. The same issue criticized Hopkins for wanting to fight undefeated Lucian Bute, saying it might possibly be his biggest mistake. True champions don't make mistakes when they test themselves against the best opponents. Hopkins is a true champion. There is no reason to be in the fighting business if you even think about ducking someone.

STEVE MARTIN
Pittsburgh, PA ■



TOUGH OLD BIRD
It seems that Bernard Hopkins has more fans now than at any time during his career. Steve Gardello and Steve Martin were among the many readers who recently wrote to THE RING about B-Hop.

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

TO WRITE THE RING

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E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided. Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity.

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPORTZFRAME

MAJOR UPSET
Underdog Rubio hands Lemieux his first loss

PHOTO BY ED DILLER/STAR BOXING

FIGHT OF THE YEAR CANDIDATE
Wolak and Rodriguez slug their way to a spellbinding draw

An Ace Season On The Deuce

You probably have to go back a full decade, to the 2001 campaign that brought us the Fight of the Year (Micky Ward-Emanuel Augustus) and the top runner-up (Julio Gonzalez-Julian Letterlough), to find a season of ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights* as well-received as the one that just concluded.

There was a Fight of the Year candidate between Delvin Rodriguez and Pawel Wolak. There were first-rate brawls like Jesus Gonzales-Francisco Sierra and Sebastian Lujan-Mark Melligen. And, of course, there were the upsets, the prospects who lost their zeroes week in and week out. The most memorable: Marco Antonio Rubio over David Lemieux, Grady Brewer over Fernando Guerrero, and, in the season opener that set the tone, Mauricio Herrera over Ruslan Provodnikov.

"We're not always this lucky," said *FNF* Senior Coordinating Producer Matt Sandulli, who called this the best season since he started working on the show about seven years ago. "We've had our ups and downs over the years in terms of what happens in the ring, but, this year, we probably had an eight-week run where every show was better than the one we'd done the week before. Hats off to the fighters, who really came to fight. That doesn't always happen."

Hats off as well to Doug Loughrey, the director of programming and acquisitions—in layman's terms, the guy who buys the fights. While he, too, acknowledged the role of luck, there was much more to it than that.

"The overall per-show budget was the same as it has been for years, but we were able to move some of that money around and increase the amount that goes to the fighters by about $8,000 to $10,000 per show," Loughrey explained. "That extra money helped on two fronts. It gave us some better fights, but it also helped us to keep fights together, rather than seeing fighters pull out on two or three weeks' notice to take other fights."

The ratings numbers indicate the 2011 success wasn't only of the critical variety. The overall household impressions were up nine percent over 2010, Hispanic household ratings shot up 17 percent, and ratings among the 18-34 demographic—those "kids" that are supposedly all flocking to MMA—were up 19 percent.

There was also a difference in the way *FNF* was treated by the non-boxing folks at ESPN, as, according to Sandulli, the boys in Bristol definitely took note of the fight quality on "The Deuce."

"The best way to illustrate that," Sandulli said, "is how many times our highlights showed up in the daily "Top 10" on *SportsCenter* this year. Friday night and Saturday morning, there was very often something from *Friday Night Fights* in there."

It's always nice to see boxing get a little attention on *SportsCenter*. Sometimes, the action and drama provided by this sport are just too explosive to ignore, and, on *FNF* in 2011, that was the case nearly every week.

—Eric Raskin

A WORTHY CAUSE

What do Muhammad Ali, Manny Pacquiao, and Juan Manuel Marquez have in common with Buzz Aldrin, Steven Seagal, and King Mohammad IV of Morocco? They—along with many other athletes, entertainers, business leaders, and public servants—have joined hands with Yank Barry to help eliminate hunger on a worldwide scale.

Since 1995, Barry (a longtime leader in the soy food industry) and his Global Village Champions have traveled throughout the world to deliver hundreds of millions of free meals to the most needy living in virtually every far-flung corner of the Earth. To date, GVC has fed more than 504 million meals in its Fight Against Hunger.

Leading up to the Pacquiao-Marquez fight at the MGM Grand on November 12, the two fighters and Top Rank have joined forces to help the Global Village of Champions Summer 2011 Membership Drive. Prior to the fight, GVC will feed a million meals in the Philippines and a million meals in Mexico on behalf of the two fighters. The registered nonprofit will also award 50 pairs of VIP tickets, flight, hotel, and $1,000 spending money to winners of the members-only drawing.

Readers interested in joining Manny, Juan Manuel, and Top Rank in helping feed the hungry can get additional information at: gogvm.com/membership

GIVING BACK
Marquez and Pacquiao help fight hunger

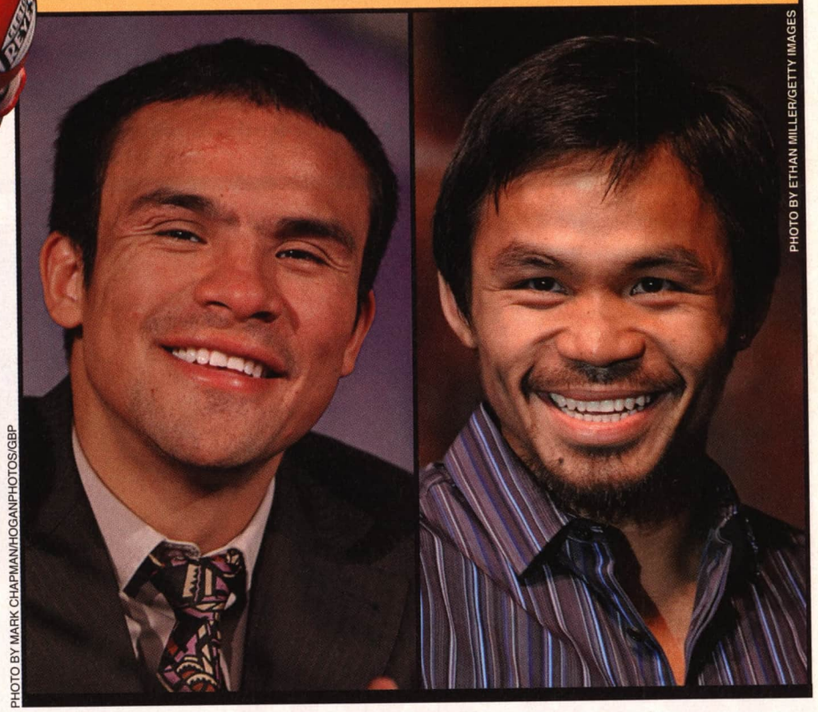


PHOTO BY MARK CHAPMAN/HOGANPHOTOS/GBP

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

BOXING BOOKSHELF

As a fan of old-time ring greats like Jimmy Clabby who finds them and their era infinitely more engrossing than anything on the current boxing moonscape, I applaud any well-intentioned and diligent effort to bring them back for another bow. But in the case of this self-published biography of the early 1900s welterweight and middleweight title claimant, my applause is a bit forced, like that for my brother when he thinks he's channeling Sinatra on Karaoke Nite.

Author Jim Clabby deserves kudos for all the time, effort, and expense he invested in this enthusiastic, earnest, and loyal literary resurrection of his famous namesake who was his father's first cousin. It's the fulfillment of a long-time Clabby family yearning to learn more about and celebrate its most famous name-bearer.

It is in fact a "remarkable, yet tragic story" about a fighter who "became addicted to a lifestyle in the ring and the celebrity it delivered," though author Clabby's handling of boxer Clabby's sad downfall is too kid-gloved.

The section about Jimmy's long sabbatical in Australia, where he became such an icon that last year he was inducted into the national boxing hall of fame, offers fresh insights about Clabby, Les Darcy (to whom he lost two 20-round decisions), and the pre-World War I boxing scene Down Under. Likewise, Jim Clabby does a pretty fair job of describing the anarchic mess boxing was then, with no universally recognized welterweight and middleweight titlists but a virtual telephone directory of self-proclaimed ones.

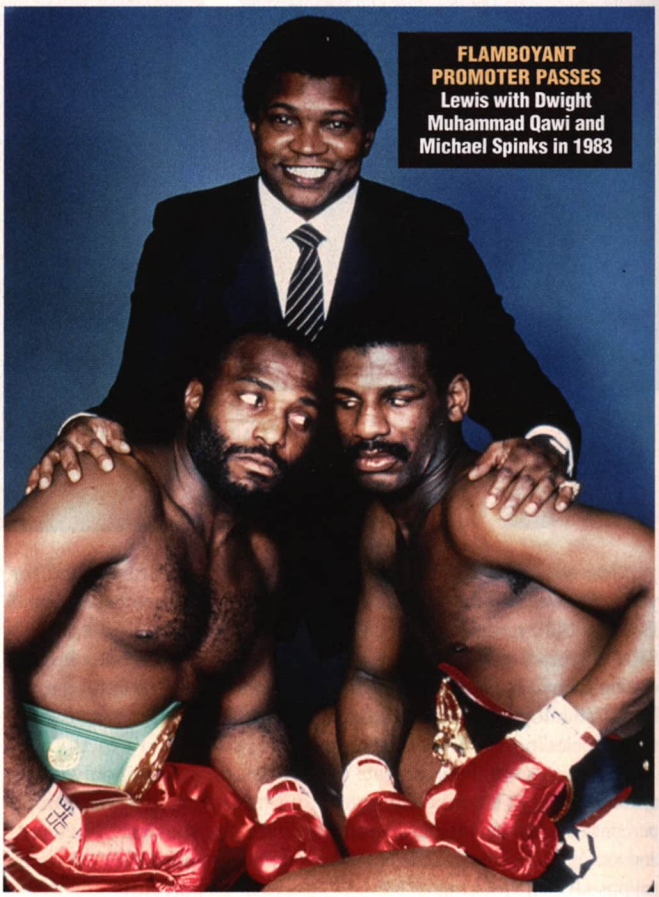
The biggest stumbling blocks are the many misspellings (Battling "Lavinsky," Gen. Douglas "McArthur," and even Joe "Lewis"), misstatements (Harry Greb and Tommy Gibbons weren't world light heavyweight champions; Jim Jeffries didn't lose his heavyweight title to Jack Johnson; Luis Resto's gloves weren't "laced with plaster" in Resto's infamous fight with Billy Collins), and general flubs (using "affect" instead of "effect," haphazard punctuation, and, even in a boxing book, it's "faint-of-heart," not "feint-of-heart") so jarring that the reader occasionally needs to pause and give himself a standing-eight count.

But I suppose any book about Jimmy Clabby is better than no book at all. His first cousin's son may not be as nimble of pen as old "Jeems" was of foot and glove, but Jim Clabby has earned a rousing hurrah at the next family reunion and at least a polite one from fans of pugilistic auld lang syne.

The Indiana Wasp: The Jimmy Clabby Story is available at amazon.com.

—Pete Ehrmann

Butch Lewis, 1946-2011

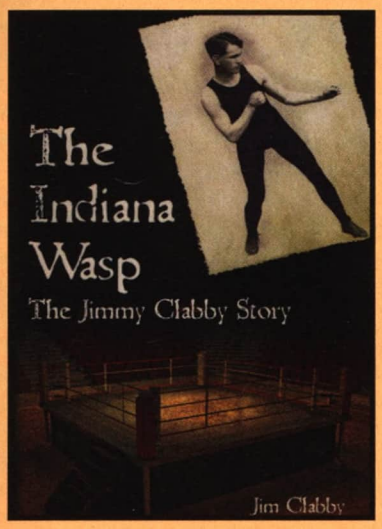


FLAMBOYANT PROMOTER PASSES Lewis with Dwight Muhammad Qawi and Michael Spinks in 1983

In life, few ever find their calling early enough to nurture and perfect their gifts. Butch Lewis, who died July 23 at age 65, was one such person.

Lewis knew early on that he harbored a salesman's soul. According to Tim Rohan of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, a fourth-grade Lewis talked a classmate into participating in a schoolyard fight. It was that charisma that carried him through careers as a street hustler, used-car salesman, and, eventually, boxing manager and promoter.

He entered boxing through his father, one of the original investors in Cloverlay, a group of investors that launched Joe



THE INDIANA WASP: THE JIMMY CLABBY STORY
By Jim Clabby
Self-published, soft cover
260 pages, $16.95

Frazier's career. Through Frazier, he met Ali and co-promoted his 1976 defense against Richard Dunn. Lewis then became a vice president at Top Rank, which enabled him to sign his most famous clients in 1976, gold medalists Leon and Michael Spinks.

Lewis guided Leon to an improbable victory over Ali in February 1978 and soon left Arum to form Butch Lewis Productions. His greatest successes came with Michael, who enjoyed a lengthy reign at 175 and a brief but lucrative tenure as heavyweight champion after beating Larry Holmes. Lewis shrewdly extricated Spinks from the HBO unification series and leveraged a $13.5-million payday to fight tournament winner Mike Tyson. That Spinks lost in 91 seconds was irrelevant; Lewis' brilliant work was already done.

Lewis also guided Bernard Hopkins during the early part of B-Hop's career, a relationship that ended acrimoniously.

To some, Lewis was the man in the "chocolate tuxedo," an over-the-top character who flashed megawatt smiles and reams of jewelry but often went without a shirt. For those who knew him best, he was a loyal friend, a master storyteller, and a fierce advocate.

—Lee Groves

TOP 10 REASONS BOB ARUM CHOSE HBO OVER SHOWTIME FOR THE PACQUIAO-MARQUEZ PPV

1. It's really fun to say "Plepler."
2. Larry Merchant presented a convoluted metaphor in which HBO was a giant praying mantis wearing an ascot and Showtime was a clay pot filled with stale Funyuns, and Arum was somehow won over by it.
3. During a meeting with Showtime's broadcasters, Arum politely asked Gus Johnson to stop yelling, and Gus wouldn't comply.
4. HBO promised Todd duBoef a role in Season Two of *Game Of Thrones* as the stepson of the king in an era ruled by nepotism.
5. During all October baseball games broadcast on TBS, Chip Caray and Buck Martinez agreed to perform duets of "Sometimes When We Touch" during the seventh-inning stretch.
6. At Showtime, Arum would have worn the undesirable designation of crankiest old Jew on the network; at HBO, they have Larry David.
7. Hey, when you get a chance to appear on Piers Morgan's show on CNN, you take it!
8. HBO promised Arum that Liev Shreiber would narrate his funeral.
9. Bob Arum. Bruce Trampler. Lee Samuels. Ricardo Jimenez. *Entourage: Las Vegas*. Green-lit.
10. HBO fired Ross Greenburg. Duh!

MANNY AND UNCLE BOB
Why did Arum steer Pacquiao back to HBO?

PHOTO BY ANDY KROPA/GETTY IMAGES

YOU BE THE JUDGE

Former Las Vegas boxing judge Chuck Giampa provides analysis of officials and scorecards of fights in which he is not directly involved.

Boxing fans witnessed an exciting and interesting fight between Joseph Agbeko and Abner Mares on August 13 at the Las Vegas' Hard Rock Hotel in the final match of Showtime's bantamweight tournament. Unfortunately, referee Russell Mora failed to take control of the low blows delivered by Mares and made numerous other mistakes, resulting in a controversial majority decision in Mares' favor.

To start, Mora awarded Mares a knockdown in the first round when Agbeko went down from a slip. Things got worse from there: According to Showtime's Al Bernstein, Mares landed approximately 30 low blows. But no points were deducted by Mora. In the 11th round, Mares floored Agbeko with a definitive low blow, which Mora ruled a legal knockdown!

The next day Mora stated: "I reviewed the fight and acknowledged that the knockdown in the first round was a slip. Also, in hindsight, I should have taken a point from Mares in the 10th round." Regarding the knockdown in the 11th round, Mora declared, "I regret missing the call. I should have taken a point from Mares or even two points."

In my opinion, during the third or fourth round, Mora should have called time out, sent Agbeko to a neutral corner, taken Mares by the hand and given him a strong warning verbally—with hand signals—to stop hitting below the belt. Then he should have sent Mares to a neutral corner and taken Agbeko by the hand and indicated to him verbally and with hand signals to stop pulling Mares behind the head.

By selling the call in this way, Mora would have committed himself to take further action for either of these fouls, including point deductions or even disqualifications. I believe that this would have changed the flow of the fight and stopped the fouls.

Would the use of instant replay prevented the travesty from occurring? Unfortunately not, as Nevada's instant replay rule states: "Instant replay would be used solely at the discretion of the referee to confirm a call. In instances in which a cut or a headbutt *stops a bout*, replay could be used to determine if the incident was accidental or an intentional foul."

As the 11th-round knockdown did not stop the fight, instant replay could not be used. Should the replay rules be changed? You be the judge.

—Chuck Giampa

Outside The Ropes

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

PAZ HONORED
Vinny inducted into Connecticut Boxing Hall of Fame

Former IBF lightweight and WBA junior middleweight titleholder **Vinny Pazienza** heads the list of 2011 inductees into the Connecticut Boxing Hall of Fame. Pazineza, who fought professionally from May 1984 until March '04, compiled a record of 50-10 (30) and was among the most popular drawing cards in the history of Connecticut boxing. Also being inducted: heavyweight **Lawrence Clay-Bey**, who was the captain of the 1996 US Olympic boxing team and tallied a 21-3-1 (16) as a pro, former light heavyweight contender **Eric Harding**, 23-1 (7), amateur standout **Kelvin Anderson**, boxing judge **Glenn S. Feldman**, boxer, referee, and coach **Billy Taylor**, and ringside physician **Dr. Michael Schwartz** … A special tribute magazine called *The Greatest: Australia Pays Tribute To Lionel Rose* has been published in Australia. Written by **Grantlee Kieza**, the magazine documents Rose's life and career. The former bantamweight champion died in May 2011 … Undefeated super middleweight and 2004 Olympic bronze medalist **Andre Dirrell** has become a major sponsor for the Youth Opportunity Corporation, an organization established by **DeVante Powell** and **Rogers Wilson** to provide mentorship, through sports, for boys aged seven through 17 in the Flint, Michigan, community. In late July, Dirrell was a special guest at an HIV prevention event. "I just want to get more in tune with the youth," Dirrell told writer **Eric Woodyard** of the *Flint Journal*. "I'm really looking forward to doing big things because I'm going to stick with them 100 percent and make sure that everything with this youth program is getting stronger and larger." … It appears the **Manny Pacquiao**'s popular TV commercials for Hewlett-Packard's smart phones ("Small guys can pack a punch.") have become somewhat of a swansong for HP's brand of smart phones and touch pads. In mid-August, the company announced that it would discontinue sales of smart phones and touch pads. Nonetheless, as part of the endorsement deal, Hewlett-Packard donated one thousand laptop computers to schools in the Philippines on Manny's behalf … When **Robert Guerrero** injured his left shoulder while sparring, forcing the cancellation of his scheduled August 27 bout with **Marcos Maidana**, there were fears that it would be a career-ending injury. But according to **Dr. Michael**

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/HOGANPHOTOS/GBP

UNACCEPTABLE
Agbeko and his corner were understandably angry about Mora's mishandling of the Mares bout

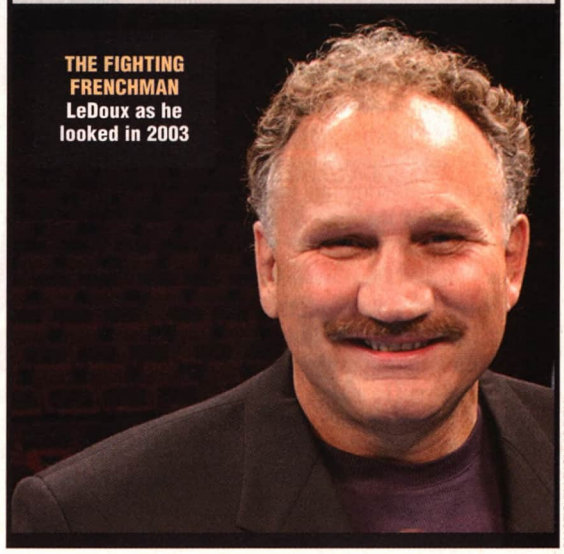
Dillingham (the San Francisco 49ers team physician), the partial tear in the rotator cuff should not threaten "The Ghost's" career. Nonetheless, Guerrero will be out of action anywhere from two to six months … Former heavyweight contender **Herbie Hide**, 39, was found not guilty at Norwich Crown Court of raping a woman. Hide is seeking legal advice to see if he has any civil redress against the woman who made the allegations … The **Association of Boxing Commissioners** has condemned a bare-knuckles bout between heavyweights **Bobby Gunn** and **Richard Stewart** that took place on August 5 at the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Casino and Hotel in Fountain Hill, Arizona, as being "abhorrent, barbaric, egregious, in contravention of a multitude of federal, state, and tribal boxing laws and regulations, and, perhaps criminal." Because the bout took place on tribal land, it was outside the jurisdiction of the Arizona State Boxing and Mixed Martial Arts Commission … According to the Associated Press, **Quincey Williams** and **Damien Bland** have filed a civil lawsuit against **Floyd Mayweather**, claiming that the boxer orchestrated a shooting attack on them two years ago outside a Las Vegas skating rink. The suit also accuses Mayweather, **Ocie Harris**, and others of making threats since the attack. Harris, who is charged with firing the shots during the incident, is scheduled to stand trial in February 2012 … Former heavyweight **Jimmy "Thunder" Peau**, 45, has been held in a US immigration detention center in Nevada since August 2010 and is fighting deportation to New Zealand. Peau, 35-14 (28), has fallen on hard times since his last fight, in December 2002, and was at one point living homeless on the streets of Las Vegas. Peau's wife, **Iris Whitemagpie Peau**, says her husband suffers significant memory loss as a result of his boxing career … **DeMario Ware**, 22, was sentenced to life without parole after a Fulton County (Georgia) jury found him guilty of felony murder, armed robbery, and possession of a gun during the commission of a crime in the death of former welterweight champion **Vernon Forrest** in July 2009. Codefendants **Charman Sinkfield**, the alleged shooter, and **Jquante Crews**, the alleged getaway driver, have yet to go to trial.

OBITUARIES

Former heavyweight title challenger **Scott LeDoux**, 62, died at his home in Coon Rapids, Minnesota, on August 11, following a nearly three-year battle with Lou Gehrig' disease. "The Fighting Frenchman" turned pro in March 1974 and, despite having already lost eight bouts, garnered a title fight with **Larry Holmes** in July 1980. Although Holmes stopped him in the seventh round, LeDoux fought on until May 1984, when he retired following a cut-eye TKO loss to **Frank Bruno** in London, England.

LeDoux's overall record of 33-13-4 (22) included bouts with a number of other well-known heavyweights of his era, including **George Foreman**, **Mike Weaver**, **Ken Norton**, and **Ron Lyle**. Many fans best remember him for knocking off **Howard Cosell**'s toupee following a controversial decision loss to **Johnny Boudreaux** in February 1977. Cosell was standing in the ring next to the ropes when LeDoux kicked them in a fit of anger, which jostled the broadcaster and knocked the hairpiece from his head.

Following his fighting career, LeDoux worked as a boxing analyst for ESPN and was elected as an Anoka County (Minnesota) commissioner. In July 2006, he became the head of the newly recreated Minnesota State Boxing Commission, which had been shut down during an earlier state budget crunch. Among the hundreds of mourners at LeDoux's memorial service was former Minnesota Governor **Jesse Ventura** … Veteran trainer **Joey Edwards**, 79, died on July 7 in Edmonton, Alberta. Edwards worked with many Canadian boxers during his long career, including former Canadian lightweight champion **Alan Ford** and former Canadian featherweight champion **Billy McGrandle** … Pennsylvania boxing judge **Bobby Grasso**, 65, died of cancer on August 6. Grasso had a six-bout pro career (3-3) in the late 1960s and early '70s and also served as a captain in the Philadelphia Sheriff's Department. He was inducted into the Pennsylvania Boxing Hall of Fame in 1998.



THE FIGHTING FRENCHMAN
LeDoux as he looked in 2003

PHOTO BY RICH ARDEN

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

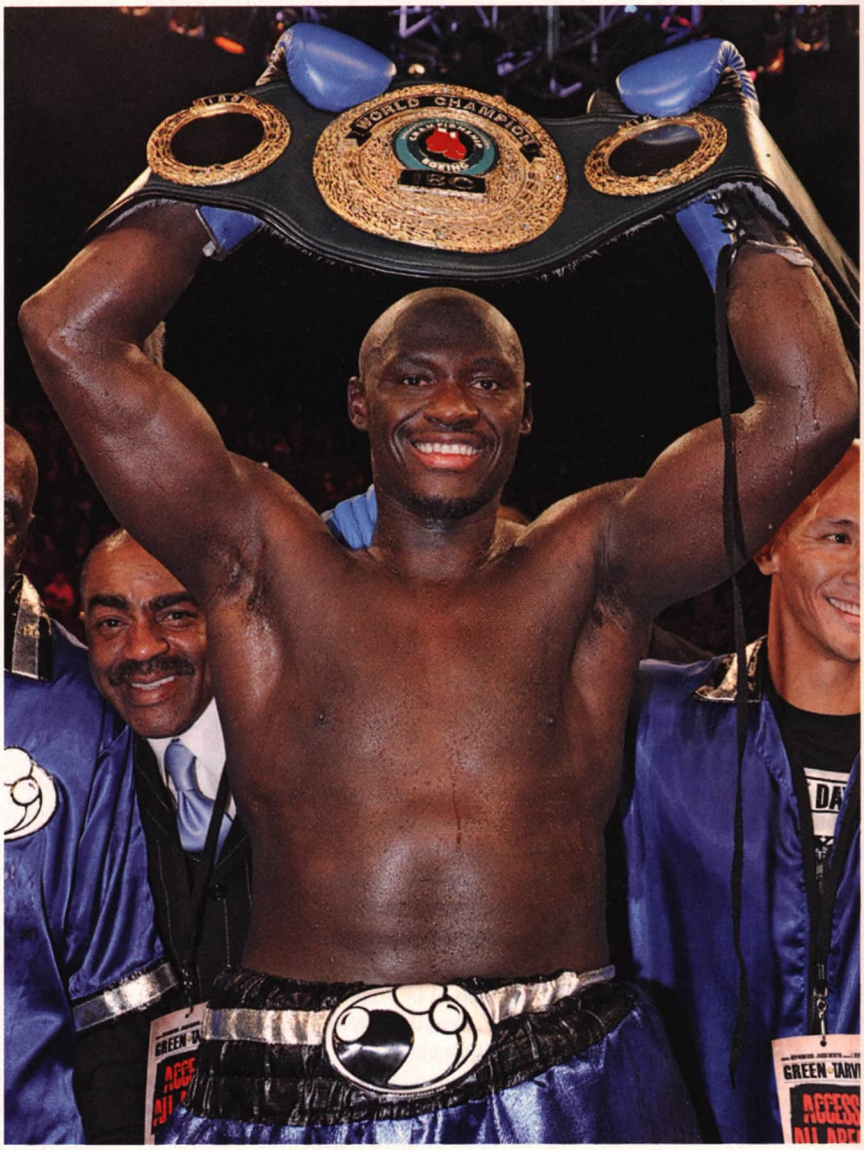


PHOTO BY TORSTEN BLACKWOOD/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

ANTONIO TARVER

A recently divorced, aging former champion going overseas for the first time in his career to get a payday on foreign soil? The storyline for Antonio Tarver's July comeback bout Down Under against Danny Green felt a bit predictable. Like a movie about a bank robbery, this probably wasn't going to end well.

But Tarver has always been a bit unpredictable. The 42-year-old "Magic Man" stepped out from behind the broadcast booth and gave a surprisingly impressive performance, stopping the favored Green in the ninth round of their cruiserweight clash. Thought to be done as a top-tier fighter after his second points loss to Chad Dawson, in May 2009, Tarver dominated Green behind a potent southpaw jab that set up several big left hands, including a second-round uppercut that dropped the 38-year-old Green for just the second time in his career. Tarver had Green dazed and stumbling around the ring in confusion at the end of ninth, when Green's corner stopped it.

This was the same Green who had bulldozed Roy Jones in one round back in December 2009. Jones went on to fight a rematch with Bernard Hopkins, anyway. So, why not a second Hopkins-Tarver fight? Or how about Tarver versus Steve Cunningham or any of the other top cruiserweights? There are plenty of intriguing possibilities now for Tarver, who is suddenly, and surprisingly, relevant again.

RATINGS ANALYSIS

For Period Ended August 21, 2011

Heavyweights: No changes.

Cruiserweights: No changes.

Light Heavyweights: Beibut Shumenov (ninth last issue) trades places with Karo Murat (eighth last issue) after Shumenov's kayo of Danny Santiago.

Super Middleweights: No changes.

Middleweights: No changes.

Junior Middleweights: No changes.

Welterweights: No changes.

Junior Welterweights: No changes.

Lightweights: Michael Katsidis (fourth last issue) exits to fight at junior welterweight. Katsidis' departure, however, allows everyone rated five through 10 last issue—Kevin Mitchell, Miguel Acosta, Paulus Moses, Miguel Vazquez, Antonio DeMarco, and John Murray—to advance one spot each. John Molina debuts at 10 filling the void created by Katsidis' departure.

Junior Lightweights: No changes.

Featherweights: Billy Dib comes in at 10 powered by his 12-round decision over Jorge Lacierva (10th last issue), who drops out of the ratings.

Junior Featherweights: No changes.

Bantamweights: In spite of the controversy surrounding the dubious officiating of referee Russell Mora, Abner Mares (fourth last issue) trades places with Joseph Agbeko (third last issue).

Junior Bantamweights: Suriyan Sor Rungvisai debuts at three, after scoring a 12-round decision victory over Tomas Rojas (second last issue), who drops to four. Rojas' slip in the ratings allows Omar Narvaez (third last issue) to move to two. Cristian Mijares (seventh last issue) departs to fight at bantamweight again. With Sor Rungvisai's arrival, all those rated four through six—Nobuo Nashiro, Yota Sato, and Tepparith Singwancha—drop one place each.

Flyweights: No changes.

Junior Flyweights: No changes.

Strawweights: Oleydong Sithsamerchai (third last issue) exits to move up two classes and campaign at junior bantamweight. It has to be noted that Sithsamerchai has yet to do anything to merit inclusion at junior bantam. But Sithsamerchai's departure does allow everyone rated fourth and below to move up one place each. It also enables Pornsawan Porpramook, who owns a decision victory over Muhammad Rachman, to enter at 10.

Pound-for-Pound: No changes.

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING's number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

THE RING Ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board, with the participation of THE RING Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on "Ratings" at ringtv.com.

Records provided by boxrec.com.

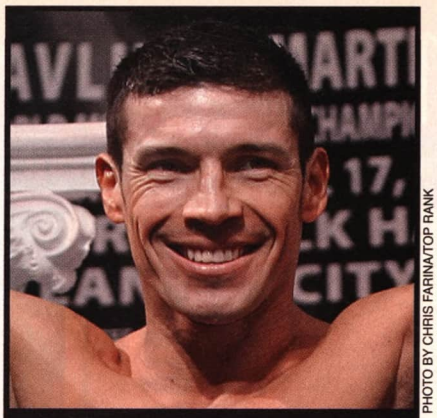


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

POUND FOR POUND

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO** *Welterweight*
2. **SERGIO MARTINEZ** *Middleweight*
3. **NONITO DONAIRE** *Bantamweight*
4. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** *Lightweight*
5. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** *Heavyweight*
6. **TIM BRADLEY** *Junior Welterweight*
7. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM** *Flyweight*
8. **GIOVANI SEGURA** *Junior Flyweight*
9. **ANDRE WARD** *Super Middleweight*
10. **BERNARD HOPKINS** *Light Heavyweight*

The RING RATINGS

For Period Ended August 21, 2011

A BALLSY MOVE
Abner Mares inches closer to the top of the bantamweights after a controversial decision victory over Joseph Agbeko.

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

For weekly updated Ring ratings, go to ringtv.com

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

Champ: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
Ukraine 56-3 (49)

1. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 42-2 (39)
2. **TOMASZ ADAMEK**
Poland 44-1 (28)
3. **ALEXANDER POVETKIN**
Russia 21-0 (15)
4. **DAVID HAYE**
England 25-2 (23)
5. **RUSLAN CHAGAEV**
Uzbekistan 26-1-1 (17)
6. **EDDIE CHAMBERS**
Philadelphia, PA 36-2 (18)
7. **ALEXANDER DIMITRENKO**
Ukraine 31-1 (21)
8. **DENIS BOYTSOV**
Russia 27-0 (22)
9. **ROBERT HELENIUS**
Germany15-0 (10)
10. **CHRIS ARREOLA**
Riverside, CA 33-2 (28)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
Philadelphia, PA 24-2 (12)
2. **MARCO HUCK**
Yugoslavia 33-1 (24)
3. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
Poland 45-2-1 (32)
4. **DENIS LEBEDEV**
Russia 22-1 (17)
5. **TROY ROSS**
Canada 24-2 (16)
6. **ANTONIO TARVER**
Tampa, FL 29-6 (20)
7. **GIACOBBE FRAGOMENI**
Italy 29-3-1 (12)
8. **OLA AFOLABI**
England 17-2-3 (8)
9. **GUILLERMO JONES**
Panama 37-3-2 (29)
10. **DANNY GREEN**
Australia 31-4 (27)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: BERNARD HOPKINS
Philadelphia, PA 52-5-2 (32)

1. **JEAN PASCAL**
Haiti 26-2-1 (16)
2. **TAVORIS CLOUD**
Tallahassee, FL 23-0 (19)
3. **CHAD DAWSON**
New Haven, CT 30-1 (17)
4. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Jamaica 51-14-2 (35)
5. **NATHAN CLEVERLY**
Wales 22-0 (11)
6. **ADRIAN DIACONU**
Romania 27-3 (15)
7. **ZSOLT ERDEI**
Hungary 33-0 (18)
8. **BEIBUT SHUMENOV**
Kazakhstan 12-1 (8)
9. **KARO MURAT**
Iraq 23-1 (14)
10. **GABRIEL CAMPILLO**
Spain 20-3 (7)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ANDRE WARD**
Oakland, CA 24-0 (13)
2. **CARL FROCH**
England 28-1 (20)
3. **LUCIAN BUTE**
Romania 29-0 (24)
4. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
Denmark 44-2 (33)
5. **ROBERT STIEGLITZ**
Germany 40-2 (23)
6. **SAKIO BIKA**
Cameroon 28-5-2 (19)
7. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Jamaica 51-15-2 (35)
8. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
Armenia 32-3 (26)
9. **DIMITRI SARTISON**
Germany 27-1 (17)
10. **THOMAS OOSTHUIZEN**
South Africa 15-0-1 (11)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: SERGIO MARTINEZ
Argentina 47-2-2 (26)

1. **FELIX STURM**
Germany 36-2-1 (15)
2. **DANIEL GEALE**
Australia 25-1 (15)
3. **MATTHEW MACKLIN**
England 28-3 (19)
4. **SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER**
Germany 34-4-1 (16)
5. **JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR.**
Mexico 43-0-1 (30)
6. **SEBASTIAN ZBIK**
Germany 30-1 (10)
7. **DMITRY PIROG**
Russia 18-0 (14)
8. **PAUL WILLIAMS**
Augusta, GA 40-2 (27)
9. **HASSAN N'DAM N'JIKAM**
France 26-0 (17)
10. **MARCO ANTONIO RUBIO**
Mexico 51-5-1 (44)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MIGUEL COTTO**
   Puerto Rico 36-2 (29)
2. **ALFREDO ANGULO**
   Mexico 20-1 (17)
3. **SAUL ALVAREZ**
   Mexico 37-0-1 (27)
4. **VANES MARTIROSYAN**
   Armenia 30-0 (19)
5. **ERISLANDY LARA**
   Cuba 15-1-1 (10)
6. **CARLOS MOLINA**
   Mexico 19-4-2 (6)
7. **CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE**
   Detroit, MI 31-4 (18)
8. **SERGIY DZINZIRUK**
   Ukraine 37-1 (23)
9. **PAWEL WOLAK**
   Poland 29-1-1 (19)
10. **AUSTIN TROUT**
    Las Cruces, NM 23-0 (13)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
   Philippines 53-3-2 (38)
2. **VICTOR ORTIZ**
   Garden City, KN 29-2-2 (22)
3. **ANDRE BERTO**
   Winter Haven, FL 27-1 (21)
4. **JAN ZAVECK**
   Slovenia 31-1 (18)
5. **VYACHESLAV SENCHENKO**
   Ukraine 31-0 (20)
6. **RAFAL JACKIEWICZ**
   Poland 37-9-1 (19)
7. **MIKE JONES**
   Philadelphia, PA 25-0 (19)
8. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA 46-7-1 (39)
9. **KELL BROOK**
   England 24-0 (16)
10. **SELCUK AYDIN**
    Turkey 22-0 (17)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **AMIR KHAN**
   England 26-1 (18)
2. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
   Palm Springs, CA 27-0 (11)
3. **MARCOS MAIDANA**
   Argentina 30-2 (27)
4. **DEVON ALEXANDER**
   St. Louis, MO 22-1 (13)
5. **ANDREAS KOTELNIK**
   Ukraine 31-4-1 (13)
6. **LUCAS MATTHYSSE**
   Argentina 28-2 (26)
7. **LAMONT PETERSON**
   Washington, D.C. 29-1-1 (15)
8. **ERIK MORALES**
   Mexico 51-7 (35)
9. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY 41-7 (28)
10. **DANNY GARCIA**
    Philadelphia, PA 21-0 (14)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ
Mexico 53-5-1 (39)

1. **BRANDON RIOS**
   Lubbock, TX 28-0-1 (21)
2. **HUMBERTO SOTO**
   Mexico 56-7-2 (32)
3. **ROBERT GUERRERO**
   Gilroy, CA 29-1-1 (18)
4. **KEVIN MITCHELL**
   England 32-1 (24)
5. **MIGUEL ACOSTA**
   Venezuela 28-4-2 (22)
6. **PAULUS MOSES**
   Namibia 27-1 (19)
7. **MIGUEL VAZQUEZ**
   Mexico 29-3 (13)
8. **ANTONIO DEMARCO**
   Mexico 25-2-1 (18)
9. **JOHN MURRAY**
   England 31-1 (18)
10. **JOHN MOLINA**
    Covina, CA 23-1 (19)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MZONKE FANA**
   South Africa 30-4 (12)
2. **RICKY BURNS**
   Scotland 32-2 (9)
3. **TAKASHI UCHIYAMA**
   Japan 17-0 (14)
4. **ROMAN MARTINEZ**
   Puerto Rico 24-1-1 (15)
5. **JORGE SOLIS**
   Mexico 40-2-2 (29)
6. **JUAN CARLOS SALGADO**
   Mexico 22-1-1 (16)
7. **TAKAHIRO AO**
   Japan 21-2-1 (10)
8. **ARGENIS MENDEZ**
   Dominican Republic 18-1 (9)
9. **ADRIEN BRONER**
   Cincinnati, OH 21-0 (17)
10. **DIEGO MAGDALENO**
    Las Vegas, NV 20-0 (7)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **YURIORKIS GAMBOA**
   Cuba 20-0 (16)
2. **CHRIS JOHN**
   Indonesia 45-0-2 (22)
3. **ORLANDO SALIDO**
   Mexico 36-11-2 (24)
4. **JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ**
   Puerto Rico 30-1 (27)
5. **DANIEL PONCE DE LEON**
   Mexico 41-3 (34)
6. **CRISTOBAL CRUZ**
   Mexico 39-12-3 (23)
7. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
   Mexico 40-6 (36)
8. **JHONNY GONZALEZ**
   Mexico 49-7 (43)
9. **MIKEY GARCIA**
   Oxnard, CA 26-0 (22)
10. **BILLY DIB**
    Australia 32-1 (19)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
   Japan 38-4-3 (24)
2. **RICO RAMOS**
   Pico Rivera, CA 20-0 (11)
3. **AKIFUMI SHIMODA**
   Japan 23-3-1 (10)
4. **RYOL LI LEE**
   Japan 18-2-1 (9)
5. **POONSAWAT KRATINGDAENGGYM**
   Thailand 44-2 (30)
6. **TAKALANI NDLOVU**
   South Africa 32-6 (18)
7. **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
   Cuba 8-0 (6)
8. **STEVE MOLITOR**
   Canada 33-2 (12)
9. **JORGE ARCE**
   Mexico 57-6-2 (44)
10. **WILFREDO VAZQUEZ JR.**
    Puerto Rico 20-1-1 (17)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **NONITO DONAIRE**
   Philippines 26-1 (18)
2. **ANSELMO MORENO**
   Panama 31-1-1 (11)
3. **ABNER MARES**
   Mexico 22-0-1 (13)
4. **JOSEPH AGBEKO**
   Ghana 28-3 (22)
5. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
   Armenia 36-3-1 (27)
6. **ERIC MOREL**
   Madison, WI 45-2 (23)
7. **YONNHY PEREZ**
   Colombia 20-2-1 (14)
8. **KOKI KAMEDA**
   Japan 25-1 (16)
9. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
   Philippines 28-2-3 (17)
10. **CHRISTIAN ESQUIVEL**
    Mexico 23-2 (17)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **HUGO CAZARES**
   Mexico 35-6-2 (25)
2. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
   Argentina 35-0-2 (19)
3. **SURIYAN SOR RUNGVISAI**
   Thailand 19-5-1 (7)
4. **TOMAS ROJAS**
   Mexico 36-13-1 (24)
5. **NOBUO NASHIRO**
   Japan 15-3-1 (9)
6. **YOTA SATO**
   Japan 21-2-1 (11)
7. **TEPPARITH SINGWANCHA**
   Thailand 16-2 (10)
8. **JUAN ALBERTO ROSAS**
   Mexico 32-6 (26)
9. **CESAR SEDA**
   Puerto Rico 21-1 (15)
10. **DRIAN FRANCISCO**
    Philippines 20-1-1 (16)

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM
Thailand 82-3-1 (45)

1. **HERNAN MARQUEZ**
   Mexico 31-2 (24)
2. **LUIS CONCEPCION**
   Panama 22-2 (17)
3. **DENKAOSAN KAOVICHIT**
   Thailand 53-3-1 (22)
4. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA**
   Japan 36-6-2 (17)
5. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
   South Africa 27-2 (18)
6. **BRIAN VILORIA**
   Waipahu, HI 29-3 (16)
7. **ROCKY FUENTES**
   Philippines 29-6-2 (18)
8. **MILAN MELINDO**
   Philippines 24-0 (8)
9. **EDGAR SOSA**
   Mexico 43-6 (26)
10. **JULIO CESAR MIRANDA**
    Mexico 35-6-1 (28)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: GIOVANI SEGURA
Mexico 28-1-1 (24)

1. **ADRIAN HERNANDEZ**
   Mexico 21-1 (13)
2. **GILBERTO KEB BAAS**
   Mexico 35-21-4 (22)
3. **OMAR NINO**
   Mexico 30-4-2 (12)
4. **IVAN CALDERON**
   Puerto Rico 34-2-1 (6)
5. **ULISES SOLIS**
   Mexico 33-2-3 (21)
6. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
   Nicaragua 29-0 (24)
7. **LUIS ALBERTO LAZARTE**
   Argentina 48-10-2 (18)
8. **RAMON HIRALES**
   Mexico 16-2-1 (9)
9. **MASAYUKI KURODA**
   Japan 20-3 (13)
10. **RYO MIYAZAKI**
    Japan 14-0-3 (8)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **NKOSINATHI JOYI**
   South Africa 21-0 (15)
2. **KAZUTO IOKA**
   Japan 8-0 (5)
3. **RAUL GARCIA**
   Mexico 30-1-1 (18)
4. **DONNIE NIETES**
   Philippines 28-1-3 (15)
5. **JUAN PALACIOS**
   Nicaragua 29-3 (22)
6. **WANHENG MENAYOTHIN**
   Thailand 17-0 (4)
7. **DENVER CUELLO**
   Philippines 26-4-6 (16)
8. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
   Japan 24-4 (10)
9. **FLORANTE CONDES**
   Philippines 25-6-1 (21)
10. **PORNSAWAN PORPRAMOOK**
    Thailand 23-3-1 (16)

by Jeff Ryan

Nerve Damage

They don't placate and ingratiate, but instead grate and irritate. They're domineering more often than endearing, lacking in verve but never failing to get on my last nerve. They've chafed my ass more than the straps of an ill-fitting athletic supporter. They're that exclusive club known as The Most Annoying People in Boxing.

And who better to head my toxic top 10 than Fisticuffs' First Family of Dysfunction …

1) The Mayweathers: "Pretty Boy" Floyd, Papa Floyd Sr., and Uncle Roger may be the most entertaining family act since the Marx Brothers, but that doesn't mean they can't get under one's skin more often than Chris Arreola's tattoo artist. For pure obnoxiousness, this trio is certainly greater than the sum of its parts.

Little Floyd will remain one of the most exasperating figures in handwraps until he meets Manny Pacquiao, period. Floyd Sr. now reportedly says that, as a condition for making that fight, "Pac-Man" shouldn't be allowed to train in his native Philippines. (Whaaaaaat?) And Roger, who practically caused a tsunami by accusing Pacquiao of using steroids, was recently quoted leveling the same charges against Amir Khan.

Apparently, anyone perceived to be a threat to Floyd Jr. gets labeled a juicer. Ivan Goldman better watch out. The next time he criticizes "Money" in his column, Uncle Roger just might accuse him of using Dianabol before sitting down at the keyboard.

2) Everyone who still acknowledges the alphabets: And, yes, that includes J. Ryan. The problem is that the journalist in me wants to report the facts, and not mentioning that a particular bout is for the WBC super featherweight title means not telling the complete story. But the WBA, WBC, IBF, WBO, HMO, UHF, DVD, REM, or whatever other ruling bodies still survive are such complete detriments to the sport that it's time THE RING and its writers stopped making any references to their existence. Ever.

My breaking point was WBC President Jose Silly Man's explanation that he didn't unjustly strip Timothy Bradley of the organization's super lightweight title, as was widely reported, but instead he simply made Bradley a "champion in recess." (That's not to be confused with the WBC's "champion in abscess," which is where titlists with dental problems are banished.) Enough with this stupidity already.

3) David Haye: To hear Haye tell it, he was going to detonate his "Hayemaker" on the chin of Wladimir Klitschko, win the heavyweight crown, defend it with a decapitation of Wladimir's brother, Vitali, become an international megastar, solve the world financial crisis, end hunger, etc., etc. But following in the sorry tradition of Allan Green and Paulie Malignaggi, big mouths who don't back up their big talk once the bell rings but instead merely back up, Haye threw one punch at a time, took no chances, and used a broken little toe as an excuse for his defeat.

If Haye attacked like he yakked, Joe Louis' skeleton would be shuddering in its grave. It pains me to include on this list a guy who,

TWO OF THE OFFENDING THREE
The annoying duo of Uncle Roger and Little Floyd work the pads

PHOTO BY SCOTT HEAVEY/GETTY IMAGES

REMATCH, ANYONE? Holyfield wants to fight Botha again!

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

before the Klitschko fiasco, was one of my three favorite fighters in the game. But while Haye didn't earn THE RING belt against Klitschko, nor do enough to earn a rematch, he truly earned *this* distinction. David, step forward and take a bow. That is, if your little piggy isn't still hurting.

4) Wladimir Klitschko: He doesn't win because he's too good. He wins because he's bigger, wider, and has a longer reach than everybody he faces. "Dr. Steel Hammer" can't be faulted for what God gave him. He can be blasted, though, for being content to jab his way to victory against someone he truly disliked and should have wanted to embalm.

5) Kelly Pavlik: "The Ghost" is a perfect nickname. Where is he? Pavlik, who once drew scorn for pulling out of a bout with Paul Williams, topped himself in August by scrapping both a shot at Lucian Bute *and* the tune-up for it, vs. Darryl Cunningham.

Pavlik's comeback from a stint at the Betty Ford Center had me rooting for him, but not anymore. Does he even want to fight? Is he really any good? Or, looking back now, was it just that his most high-profile kayo victim, Jermain Taylor, wasn't that good himself?

6) The HBO Powers-That-Be: When Ross Greenburg, the president of HBO Sports, recently stepped down after 33 years at the network, he said it was because he'd grown tired of boxing politics and the hassles of negotiating for fights. But reports soon surfaced that Greenburg was forced out by corporate suits that were unhappy with his purchase of such duds as Klitschko-Haye and Bradley-Devon Alexander, and his loss of the Manny Pacquiao-Shane Mosley showdown to the pay-per-view arm of rival Showtime. (Though Pac Man vs. "Sugar Shane" was dreadful, it turned a handsome profit.)

Well, these geniuses canned a guy who won 51 Emmys, created such extraordinary programming as *Real Sports With Bryant Gumbel*, *Hard Knocks, 24/7*, and numerous documentaries, and helped make HBO the powerhouse it has been in the Sweet Science for the past two decades. HBO should stand for Home Body Odor these days because this stinky decision is the pits.

7) Evander Holyfield: George Brett won batting titles in three decades, Gordie Howe played in the NHL in five decades, and now "The Real Deal" can boast that he has annoyed me for one reason or another in four decades. It's not bad enough that he's still active. But now he's offering us rematches (Frans Botha anyone?) of fights we never wanted to see the first time around.

8) Roy Jones, Shane Mosley, and Zab Judah: These three retreads go together because they have something in common. They are all shot, yet remain too greedy/stubborn/delusional to quit. Jones is the most infuriating of the bunch because he had the nerve/gall/audacity/temerity/insolence/balls/chutzpah to say on the air when Paul Williams was losing to Erislandy Lara, "This is the type of punishment that causes bad problems once he's done with the game." Can you believe that?

This tired triumvirate ought to pack it in already. Ideally, all three could make their retirement announcement at the same press conference and save their promoters money on cold cuts.

9) Michael Buffer: What's with the weird tan? My least-favorite ring announcer could serve as Otto the Orange, the mascot for the University of Syracuse. Buffer looks like a wax figure of himself at Madame Tussauds and has now made his ring introductions even more unbearable by, in essence, singing them. When Buffer's on, give me Bufferin.

10) Russell Mora: The referee of August's Abner Mares-Joseph Agbeko shootout is a late addition to the list, but a worthy one. Mora either didn't see all of the numerous low blows Mares landed on the Ghanaian (including one that sent Agbeko to the canvas for what was incredibly ruled a knockdown in round 11) or he believes the winner of a fight is the competitor who leaves the most dents on his opponent's protective cup.

Way to go, ref. It's not even Christmas yet, but you helped turn that nightclub at the Hard Rock in Las Vegas, the scene of the fight, into the Nutcracker Suite. ■

by Ivan Goldman

Blue Corner Blues

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

When Amir Khan scored a fifth-round kayo over Zab Judah, he was assigned to the red corner and Judah to the blue. I hear what you're thinking. So what? I'll explain. The red corner prevailed in all eight contests that night at the Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas, four by kayo, three by unanimous decision, and one by majority decision.

If you attend shows regularly, you see this over and over. Fighters assigned by the promoter to one particular corner win each and every time. It doesn't happen on every card, but it does on lots of them, and, when it doesn't, it's very common for the same corner to prevail in almost every contest. People in the press section make cracks about the blue-corner-red corner phenomenon all the time. It's another goofy but accepted part of the sport.

When I explained the situation to celebrated statistician Ima Stinkfinder at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, I asked whether this corner business could be just a coincidence.

"Intriguing question," she replied. "Let me get back to you." She called back the next day and answered in language she said a boxing writer could understand.

"The chance that the red corner, in a series of random events, would win all eight fights," she said, "is precisely the same as a flying pig landing at the casino entrance, doing a little tap dance for the tourists and sending the ghost of Bugsy Siegel around to collect tips."

"That's not very likely is it?" I said.

"We have a saying in the scientific community," she replied. "Don't be a schmuck."

"You don't have to get personal," I said.

"No," explained Stinkfinder. "That's the saying: 'Don't be a schmuck.'"

Anyway, since apparently it's no accident, what could it mean? Do promoters send out some kind of secret message to the officials about which fighters they want to see win?

Well, not exactly. They send officials a clear, unambiguous message, and it goes like this:

"We've got this roster of favorites, see? People we invested in. They're competing against opponents. Don't ever mix our guys up with opponents. And just in case you have trouble keeping track of who's who and what's what, we'll make it easy for you. See that corner? We like that corner. We hope you'll like it too. They're all fine people over there, salt of the earth, every single one. Now, see the other corner? No, don't look too hard. Then you might discover the people there are human beings too, which could make your job more difficult.

"Here's your scoring pencil. We paid for it. In fact, we're paying your salary tonight. You want us to pay your salary again sometime? That can be arranged, okay? Anyway, that guy in the wrong corner over there? He probably drove here in a stolen car after he beat up his wife again. Also, we're pretty sure he's an arsonist. But the guy in our corner? He supports 12 brothers and sisters plus his mother. In fact, he supports your mother. Indirectly, that is. See what we're getting at? Just nod your head. Good. Now have a good night, score it right and don't make us explain this again."

Actually, the fact that the promoter's fighters tend to win doesn't necessarily mean officials are corrupt. Most of the time, it means

UNHAPPY ZAB
Hey, you put me in the *wrong* corner!

the matchmaker accomplished his job of putting together fights—maybe even competitive fights—which the opponents won't win. But putting all his fighters in the same corner is blatant and vaguely sick.

Khan was on his way to a kayo anyway, but he stopped Judah in the fifth round by holding him with his left while slamming him low with a huge right—a double foul the referee didn't catch. The instant replay could have changed the call, but boxing's not ready for the 21st century. It's barely out of the 19th.

It's awfully easy to like Khan, who throws the right punches at the right time, throws them super fast, and ducks no one. Sure, he's been knocked out, but so has Manny Pacquiao. It happens. But it's not likely to happen again. To either of them. Until they fight each other, of course.

PAY-PER-WHAT?

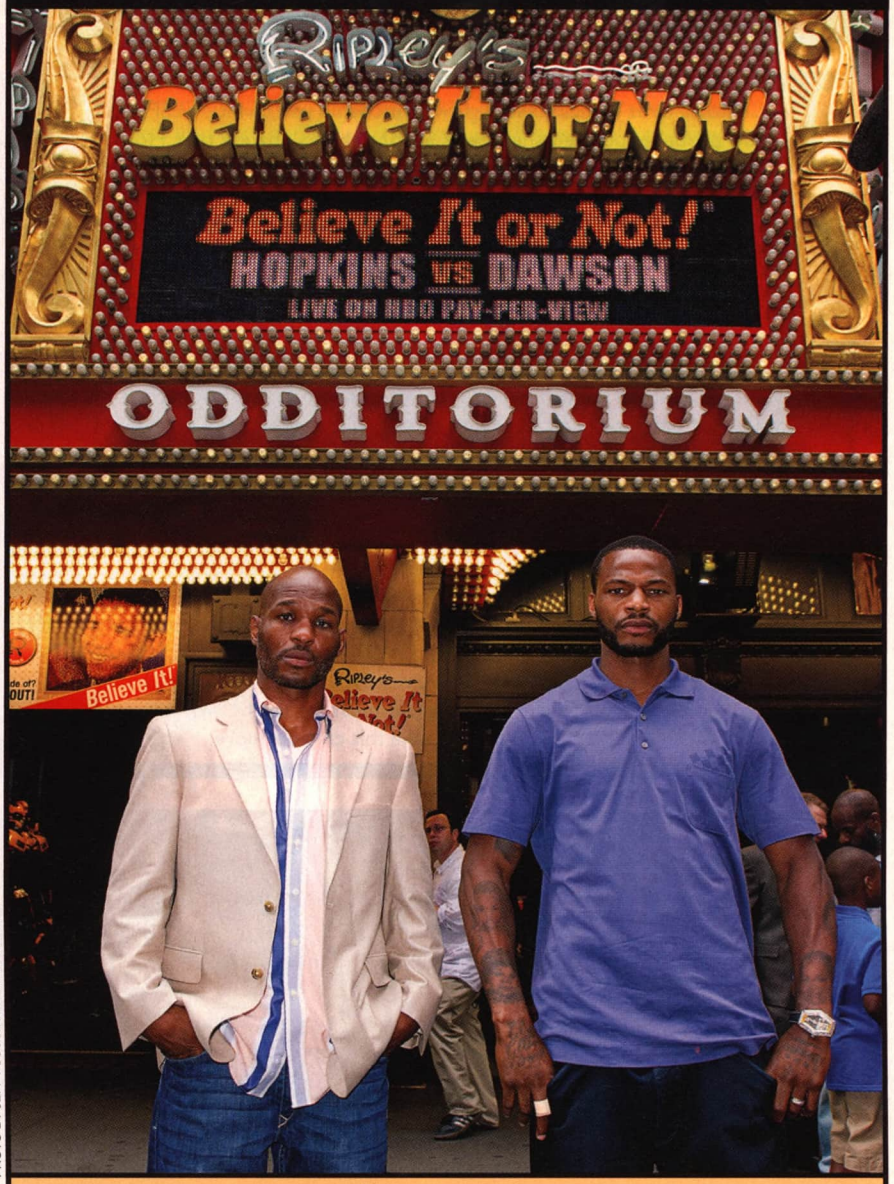


PHOTO BY JEFF FUSCO/HOGANPHOTOS/GBP

YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT
Two East Coast guys fighting in Los Angeles

Chad Dawson, a skilled, overly patient light heavyweight whose style is about as exciting as a knitting class, hasn't knocked out anyone in his last six fights. Some fighters step it up as they step up in class, and some, like Dawson, just get more careful. If Wladimir Klitschko were a southpaw with a touch of flu, he'd fight like Dawson.

Bernard Hopkins is a Zen boxing master who can certainly be entertaining as he confounds his younger opponents, but, in his 11 outings since stopping smaller Oscar De La Hoya in September 2004, he's scored zero kayos.

When B-Hop runs into a guy who doesn't want to mix it up, he typically figures who needs the pain and ratchets down his assault. Why this match would merit pay-per-view dollars is beyond understanding. The fact that both guys are East Coasters fighting in L.A. tells you everything you need to know about the state of their hometown fan bases.

Yes, the two fighters and their camps will promise us the sun, moon, and stars, but the most positive factor in favor of this contest is that it doesn't have to be very good to exceed expectations.

MAGOOS

To judge Gwen Adair who scored it 39-37 for Art Hovhannisyan over Cristobal Cruz in their junior lightweight clash. If you saw it on ESPN2, you probably noticed there was absolutely no chance that Hovhannisyan, the favorite, won three rounds. Cruz had taken charge before they went to the scorecards after an accidental clash of heads in round four. One judge had it a draw and another for Cruz (as I did), and both scores were acceptable. But Adair, whose scores have been embarrassing, did it again, somehow giving Hovhannisyan three rounds and forcing a draw.

What's up with Kelly Pavlik pulling out less than a week before a fight and muttering something about not fighting a southpaw for peanuts? Kelly, my boy, only two US networks pay serious money to fighters. You just alienated one (Showtime) and caused the other (HBO) to congratulate itself for not scheduling you. Next time you need an excuse to bail on a contract, why not seek pointers from pullout artist David Haye?

And now the train wreck: Referee Russell Mora's single-handed destruction of the final clash of Showtime's bantamweight tournament. Mora's performance was so fiercely and uncompromisingly revolting (and damaging to Joseph Agbeko's testicles) that it would have exhausted the tolerance of 1919 World Series fixer Arnold Rothstein. Just that one bad call in round 11, somehow seeing a hideously low blow from Abner Mares as a knockdown, created a huge three-to-four-point wrong turn. Mora's only possible defense is gross incompetence. The commission should have reversed his call and pulled him out for round 12. It would have been a great message to the world sent straight from the boxing capital: We won't take this crap anymore.

FOUL BALL
Don't worry, Abner, it was a perfectly legal blow

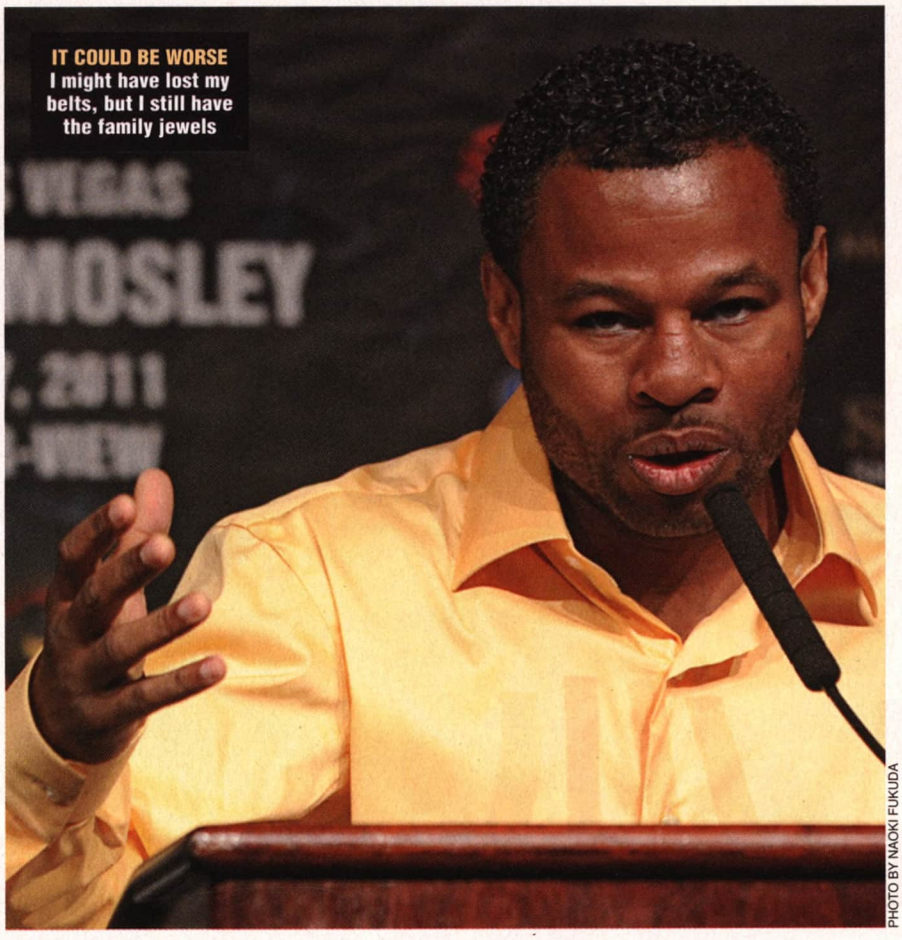
BUSY AND SPECIAL
Who has time for trivialities?

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

The Luck Of Sugar

Shane Mosley, whose ex-wife Jin kept even his championship belts as part of the divorce settlement, may have decided his own outcome wasn't really that grim after word spread about the husband in Garden Grove, California, whose displeased wife drugged him, cut off his penis, and fed it to the garbage disposal. In fact, from now on Sugar Shane and every other guy who used to think he got a raw deal from his ex can look down toward his toes, sigh with relief, and know that Lady Luck smiled upon him after all.



IT COULD BE WORSE
I might have lost my belts, but I still have the family jewels

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

Floyd's So Special

Walk into any boxing gym on Earth and ask everyone who's willing to fight Manny Pacquiao for $30-million to raise his hand. Next, go find Floyd Mayweather and ask him the same question. Now you know what makes Floyd so special.

And Floyd's So Busy

Pacquiao attorney Dan Petrocelli tells RingTV.com's Lem Satterfield that "Money" Mayweather was in a nightclub burning a hundred-dollar bill on one of the dates he claimed he was too busy to provide a deposition in answer to Pacquiao's slander suit. The judge is unlikely to consider such an event, if it did transpire, as a reasonable excuse for avoiding a court order. The civil court forecast for Floyd is cloudy with a 60-percent chance of self-destruction.

$200 Nosebleeds

Last issue, I pointed out that the "cheap" seats for Mayweather-Victor Ortiz were priced at a staggering $150. Later they released prices for Pacquiao-Juan Manuel Marquez, also slated for the MGM Grand Arena in Las Vegas. This time bottom-end seats were offered at a deliriously high $200.

What fans up there see are three mouse-sized creatures (one being a referee) in a ring smaller than a shoebox. It's like trying to watch a chess match from the top of Pike's Peak. Not all of them are positioned to see the jumbo screen either.

Still, fans in the low-oxygen section understand what they're getting. They go for the experience, and, yes, it's great to be there at a mega-fight to absorb the waves of excitement pulsating through the arena. Everyone gets swept into the frenzy. I guarantee you Jimmy Lennon, Jr., Michael Buffer, and all those stars from other sports sprinkled around the arena get just as worked up as everyone else. But have the plutocrats in charge of prices ever looked down from that back row to see (or not see) what they're actually selling up there? ■

Ivan Goldman can be reached at ivangoldman@yahoo.com.

CAMERA CLICKS

PHOTO BY DANIEL PEREZ/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY ANDREAS RENTZ/GETTING IMAGES FOR RED BULL

1. THE BIGGER THEY ARE; THE BIGGER THEY SPLASH
6'9", 260-pound British heavyweight Tyson Fury suffers a knockdown at the hands of a young lady in a bikini during the Max Clifford's Celebrity Golf Challenge Fund-Raising Weekend at La Cala Resort in Spain. Thankfully, it was a soft landing—almost as soft as Dereck Chisora's physique for his July showdown with Fury.

2. "WOW, THIS THING IS FASTER THAN ANDRE WARD!"
Arthur Abraham loves his high-acceleration vehicles, but none of his sports cars go as fast as Martin Tomczyk's racecar, in which Abraham rode shotgun for a moment at the Red Bull On Track event in Nuerberg, Germany, in July. The only thing that goes from 0 to 60 faster than Tomczyk's car is Abraham's loss column.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

3

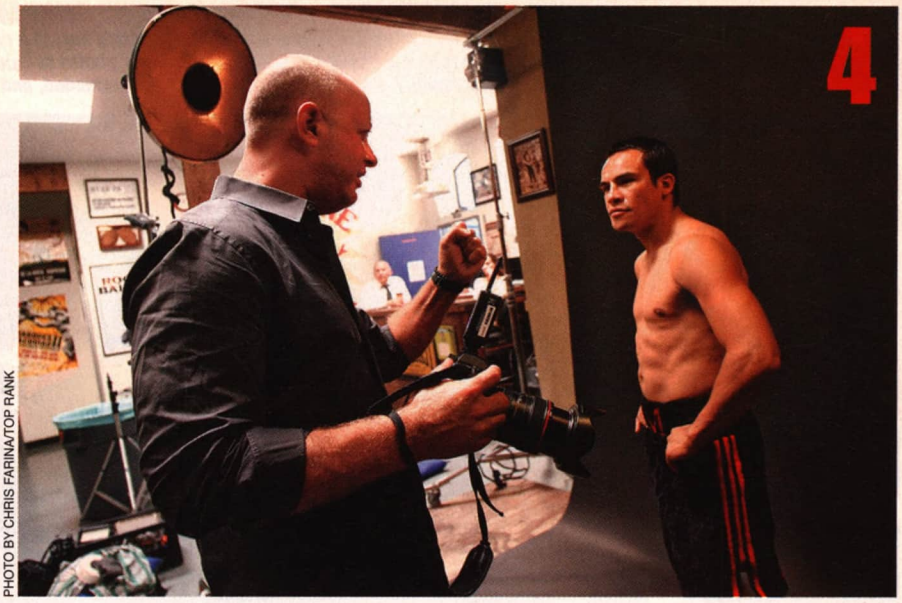


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

4

PHOTO BY TORSTEN BLACKWOOD/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

5

3. HAILING FROM CASTLE GRAYSKULL ...

It's hard for a clean-cut, 118-pound guy to look intimidating, but Abner Mares is trying his best with this skeleton-face bandana. Once his fight against Joseph Agbeko began, Mares gave the bandana to referee Russell Mora, who covered his eyes with it and attempted to officiate a fight blindfolded. As we all know, the experiment didn't go very well.

4. SAY "QUESO!"

Photographer David Drebin poses Juan Manuel Marquez for a prefight photo shoot, while Marquez glares at him with a look that seems to say, "I know how to make a fist, but thanks anyway for the demonstration." No truth to the rumor that the spray bottle Drebin used to grease up Marquez' torso was filled with the fighter's own urine.

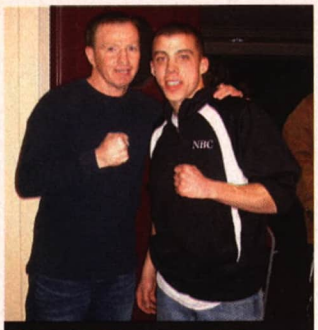
5. THIS FIGHTER CAN REALLY CRACK

Now that Danny Green's career as a boxer appears to be winding down, given the brutality of his loss to Antonio Tarver over the summer, perhaps he has a future as a plumber. As you can see, the Australian cruiserweight got a bit cheeky at the weigh-in for the Tarver fight. It's too bad Green wasn't around during the Joe Louis era because he certainly would have qualified for the Bum of the Month club.

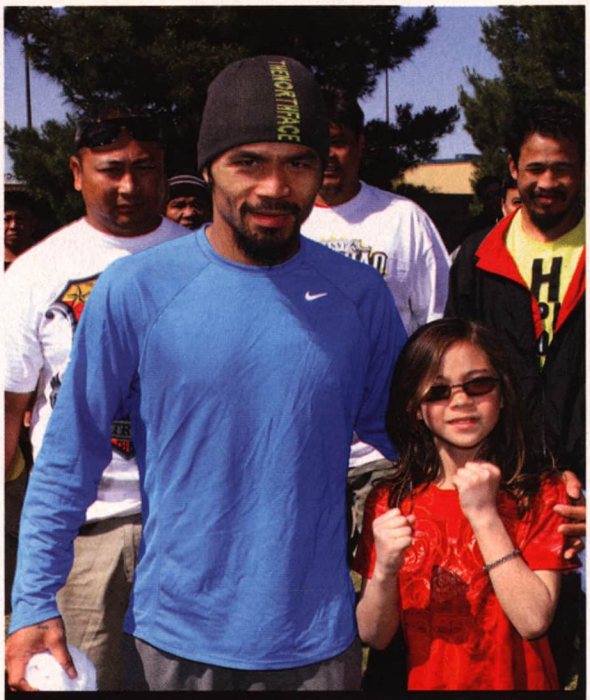
AT THE FIGHTS

WANT TO SEE YOURSELF IN THE RING MAGAZINE?

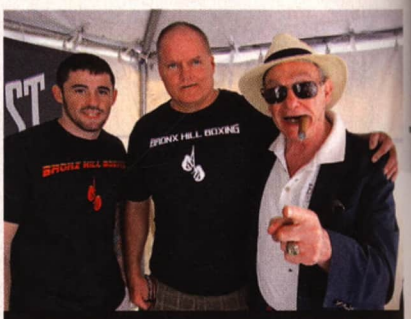
Send us your photos from a fight with you posing next to a celebrity, athlete, or other famous person and we will consider it for publication in the magazine. Send photos to celebrityphotos@sepublications.com. Make sure to include your name(s), the celebrity name(s), the fight attended, and your contact information. See you at the fights!



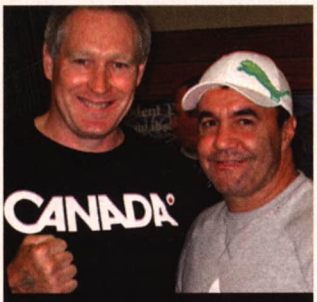
Micky Ward, with Joey Meuse, at the 2011 Lowell Golden Gloves



Manny Pacquiao, with Trinity Rose Wambolt, at the UNLV track in Las Vegas



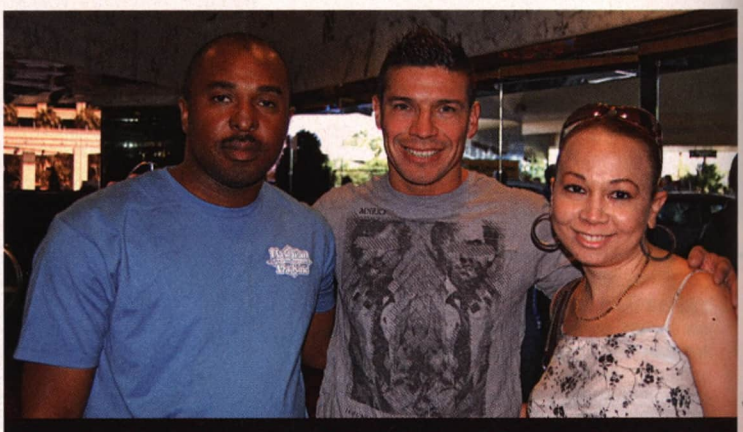
Bert Sugar, with Zack Skaggs and Ray Doemer, at Hall Of Fame Weekend



Jeff Fenech with Patrick Mascoe

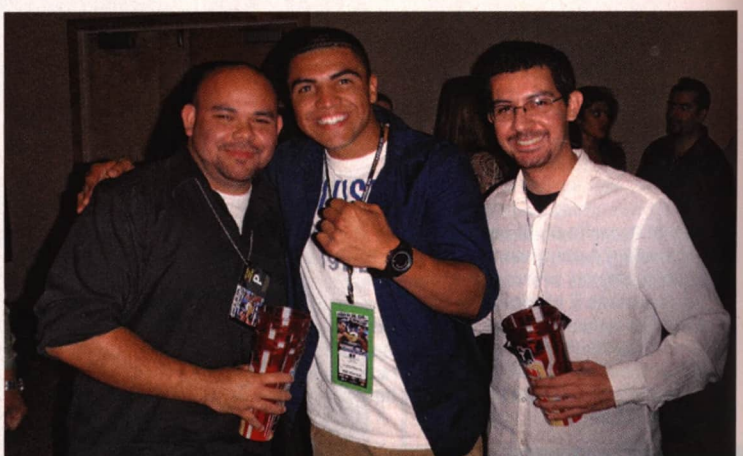
Marco Antonio Barrera, with Pinoy cowboys (Jessie Garrovillas, Cristy, Ellen, and Lita Castro), at Pacquiao-Clottey

Aaron Pryor, with Vincent Brown, at Graziano's World Famous Restaurant in Canastota, NY



Sergio Martinez, with Lorenzo and Dilenia Collins, at Pacquiao-Mosley weigh-in

Bernard Hopkins, with PA State Representative Tom Quigley, at the Pennsylvania State Capitol in Harrisburg, PA



Victor Ortiz, with Steve and Matt Flores, at Marquez-Diaz postfight press confernece

The RING

CARD GIRL OF THE MONTH

Alexis Nikole

Tale of the Tape

Height: 5'6"
Weight: 108
Measurements: 32-25-35
Stance: Orthodox
Reach: 28 inches
Favorite Fighter: Manny Pacquiao
Hometown: Rancho Cucamonga, CA
Current Location: Los Angeles
Where You've Seen Her: Virgin Mobile Ad Campaign, Hostility Clothing, *Tapout* magazine

PHOTO BY TIM REGAS/PHOTOMEZZO

To Book Alexis: Go to http://willowmodelmanagement.com/ or call Stacie Smith at 951-676-7707.

Do you know someone who could be the next Ring Card Girl of the Month?

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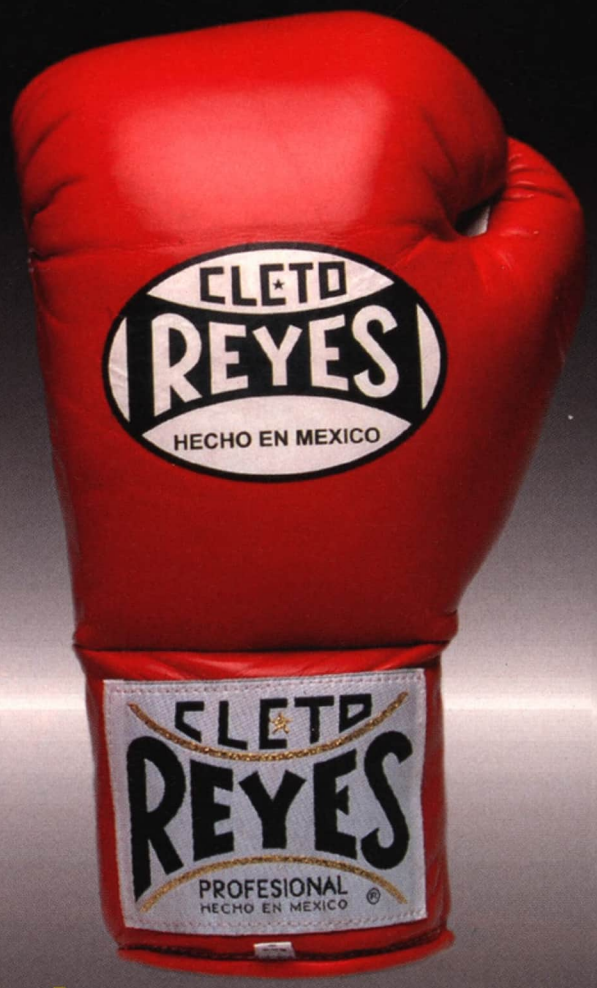

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The RING ALL-STAR REPORT CARDS

Grading Boxing's Elite

By Don Stradley

This year's all-star list featured a noticeable trend, but it had nothing to do with fighters of a certain age or ethnicity being represented.

What we noticed was the large number of fighters we had to leave *off* the list.

Never before have we gone through so much to nail down 20 fighters. We'd think we were done, but more names would barge into our minds, demanding consideration. They were coming from the farthest corners of the world, from Japan, Germany, Poland, Mexico, Thailand, and, yes, even America. These fighters were selling tickets. They were providing excitement. They were developing followings. Some of them aren't on HBO or Showtime, but they are the fighters who make you hit the Internet on Sunday morning to see how they did the night before or maybe to catch a clip on YouTube.

Some of the fighters we pondered included Tomasz Adamek, Marco Huck, Jan Zaveck, Mikkel Kessler, Krzysztof Wlodarczyk, Alfredo Angulo, Victor Ortiz, Timothy Bradley, Felix Sturm, Chris John, Juan Manuel Lopez, Mikey Garcia, Abner Mares, Koki Kameda, Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym, and Jorge Arce. There are nearly enough fighters here to make a second list.

It wasn't easy to cut them. Some, like Kessler and Adamek, are rugged, worthy performers who have established strong followings. Others, like Kameda and John, are slowly creating their own legends overseas. And then there's Arce, who is just a lot of fun. Still, as frustrating as it was to pare down our list, the large number of names falling just short was a pleasant reminder of the sport's continued growth around the world. Put aside the problems within the sport, the bum decisions, the poor officiating, the ridiculous behavior of the alphabet organizations, and instead consider the vast, colorful array of fighters out there to enjoy. It's a good feeling. It's a sign, perhaps, that boxing is pretty healthy.

So who made our list? You are about to find out. How did we end up choosing the following 20 over the others? Trust us, it's an inexact science. Fighters who draw big crowds and huge pay-per-view numbers were the easy picks. Fighters who rate on our pound-for-pound list or are recognized as RING champions had a good shot, but they certainly weren't guarantees. And being on last year's list didn't guarantee anything, either. You will see six new faces here replacing the half-dozen who didn't repeat.

Then there are the intangibles. Some of the fighters on our list aren't particularly famous yet, but there's something about them; they are on the verge of big things. And there are some, we'll admit, who have certainly benefited from padded records and careful match-making. But sometimes a star isn't necessarily a great fighter and vice versa.

Readers should also keep in mind that timing is everything. If we were to compile our list five months from now, with so many fights pending, it might look a lot different.

With that in mind, here is the 2011 All-Star Report Cards. The fighters are judged by talent, achievement, marketability, support system, and growth potential. They are presented in order of weight class, starting with the heavyweights.

WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO

Heavyweight Champion

56-3 (49)

TALENT: Another year, another two defenses, and Klitschko is still heavyweight champion of the world. Working behind the left jab, which he can use as a bludgeon or a range finder, and throwing enough right hands to keep opponents wary, the 6'6" Klitschko has become virtually un-hittable. He would have to be considered one of the best defensive fighters around, right up there with Bernard Hopkins and Floyd Mayweather. **Grade: A**

ACHIEVEMENT: Sixteen title defenses spread out over two reigns, including three since winning THE RING belt, is pretty impressive. Since our last report card, he scored a decisive 10th-round knockout of Sam Peter and a lopsided decision over David Haye. True, his resume is not spotted with Hall of Famers, but he's gone to the post 59 times, and only thrice did he not come away victorious. **Grade: A-**

MARKETABILITY: In Germany, he's endorsed Hugo Boss and Mercedes. Unfortunately, Klitschko may be less marketable in the US than ever before. After several bouts on obscure cable networks and experimental Internet broadcasts, Klitschko was back on HBO for the highly anticipated Haye bout. The champion didn't make a great case for himself, and it wouldn't surprise us if he's not invited back. Ironically, his prefight verbal jousting with Haye was the liveliest he's ever been. Then the fight started.

Grade: C (US), **A** (continental Europe)

SUPPORT SYSTEM: Klitschko's German manager Bernd Boente doesn't get enough credit for the way he guides Klitschko's career. For one thing, Klitschko is such a phenomenon in Europe that he can only fight in stadium venues, so Boente is constantly trying to find venues large enough and then securing dates in between rock concerts and football matches. That's not as easy as it sounds and neither is dealing with the two major German television networks, RTL and ARD. Boente is a master of forcing opponents' managers to concede on certain points. He has two particular strategies. One is to make you think you're a partner in the promotion and that he is working with you to make the event happen. The other is to make you think you'll never get this sort of opportunity again, so concede everything to Klitschko. Boente doesn't hesitate to end negotiations if things don't go his way. Trainer Emanuel Steward has also been invaluable to Klitschko's success, turning Klitschko into a nearly unbeatable defensive machine. Steward has only failed in his efforts to make Klitschko more aggressive, for not even Steward can turn a Great Dane into a pit bull. **Grade: A**

GROWTH POTENTIAL: At 35, Klitschko is the age his brother was when the elder Klitschko started experiencing back problems that eventually resulted in a long layoff. Wlad, too, has been dealing with physical problems recently. Add to this the scarcity of decent heavyweight challengers, and you have to think the champion is close to the end of his career. At press time, Klitschko expressed an interest in fighting Chris Areola, perhaps in America. **Grade: B-**

PHOTO BY ALEXANDRA BEIER/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

VITALI KLITSCHKO

WBC Heavyweight Titleholder

42-2 (39)

TALENT: Slightly taller and far more forceful than younger brother Wlad, Vitali can still rip opponents apart with his right hand and beat them silly with his left jab. Some of the old power is gone, a result of age and a delicate back, and he seems slower, but he can still grind men down to a pulp. He has a tremendous understanding of ring generalship and is never caught out of position. He's nearly as hard to hit cleanly as his brother but not as hesitant to mix it up. He seems to relish dominating and outthinking opponents and is masterful at conserving energy so he can carry his big hulking body through 12 rounds. At 40, with some injuries behind him, the elder Klitschko may seem like a rusted old battleship, but, as far as we can tell, he is still unsinkable. **Grade: A-**

ACHIEVEMENT: Klitschko has had a great career, including two reigns as an alphabet titlist, the first coinciding with his reign as THE RING's champion. The most memorable fight of his career may have been his valiant loss to Lennox Lewis, but he also has wins over such contenders and titlists as Sam Peter, Corrie Sanders, Herbie Hide, and Chris Arreola. He's talented enough that if not for a four-year layoff to pursue Ukraine politics and allow his back injuries to heal, he might have been THE RING champion for the entire decade. Since our last all-star list, he handed Shannon Briggs a horrible 12-round beating that put Briggs in the hospital. Odlanier Solis injured his knee in the opening round of his bout with Klitschko and couldn't continue, but he probably would've ended up like the rest. **Grade: A**

MARKETABILITY: His brother may be the heavyweight champ, but Vitali has always been the more interesting and mysterious of the two. Unfortunately, his four-year layoff destroyed whatever chance he had to grab the American audience. He's still a big hit in Germany and, along with his brother, is an important sports figure in Ukraine. **Grade: B-**

PHOTO BY PATRIK STOLLARZ/GETTY IMAGES

SUPPORT SYSTEM: If Vitali seems to be the ultimate European fighter, it is probably because the ultimate European trainer, Fritz Sdunek, trains him. Sdunek has a string of successes reaching back to the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul, when Sdunek guided lightweight Andreas Zülow to a gold medal. Sdunek's other charges have included the Polish-German star Dariusz Michalczewski, Artur Grigorian, and Zsolt Erdei. Sdunek, a pretty fair amateur boxer in the 1960s, has the personality of a dour gym coach, but he and Vitali have a strong chemistry. Nothing seems to rattle Vitali, and that's because Sdunek sets the tone in the corner. **Grade: A**

GROWTH POTENTIAL: Should he get past Tomasz Adamek in September, Klitschko has suggested he fight David Haye to get the knockout his brother couldn't get. Other than that, it's probably another mandated defense or perhaps retirement. **Grade: B-**

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

BERNARD HOPKINS

Light Heavyweight Champion

52-5-2 (32) and 1 no-contest

TALENT: At age 46, Hopkins can still throw his right hand with stinging accuracy. He's also a defensive genius and understands the science of boxing better than just about anyone in this era. He rarely gets hit squarely, rarely loses a round, and is a master of dictating a fight's style and pace. His power is a question mark. He hasn't stopped anyone in years, but, according to former trainer Freddie Roach, he can still crack like a heavyweight in the gym. **Grade: A**

ACHIEVEMENT: Each generation of boxing fans gets an ageless wonder, and this era is lucky to have Hopkins. Twenty title defenses at middleweight, plus a series of memorable performances at light heavyweight, has made him a lock for the International Boxing Hall of Fame. Winning a world title at 46 by beating Jean Pascal is bound to be a record that lasts long into the century. Even Hopkins' losses have been close, disputed decisions. It's to Hopkins' credit that he has continued after a close 2008 loss to Joe Calzaghe, for he seems better than ever. **Grade: A+**

MARKETABILITY: Ironically, he's more marketable now than in the past. The reason is that his two recent bouts with Pascal were two of the best fights of his career. Hopkins decided to be less defensive and pour on some aggression, making both bouts very entertaining. The fact that the first bout was scored a draw, when many thought Hopkins had earned the win, did something we never thought we'd see—it made Hopkins a sentimental favorite going into the rematch. Hopkins does a good job on ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights* when he works as a guest analyst in the studio, but there's much more that he could do. On the other hand, he seems pretty happy just being who he is, breaking records for longevity, running his mouth at press conferences, and scoring upsets over younger, stronger opponents. **Grade: A-**

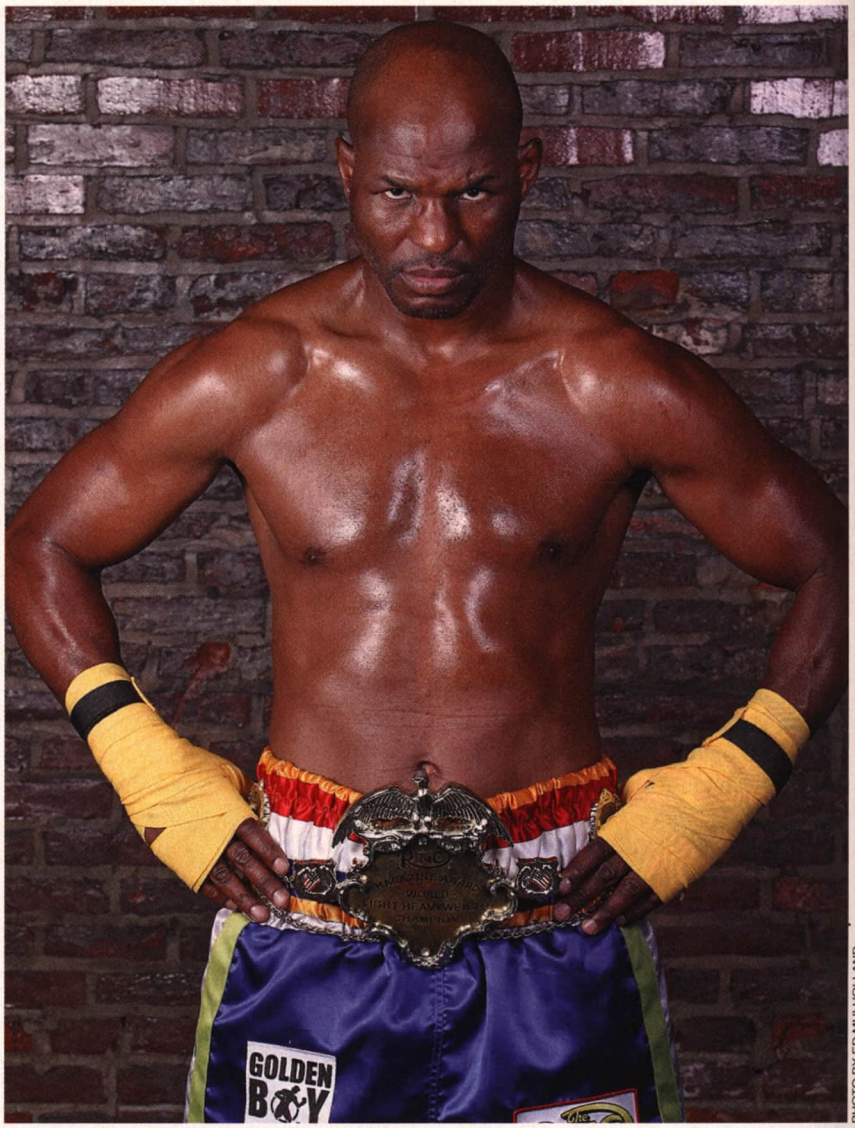

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

SUPPORT SYSTEM: No one thought his relationship with Golden Boy Promotions would last. After all, Hopkins had a history of suing promoters and getting into ugly disputes with business partners. Even so, he and GBP seem to have a solid work relationship. Easier to understand is his relationship with trainer Naazim Richardson, another old school type who loves to analyze opponents. Add to this the city of Philadelphia, which occasionally pays tribute to "B-Hop," and Hopkins' seemingly stable family life, and there's enough support to hold the geezer up for a few more fights, at least. **Grade: A**

GROWTH POTENTIAL: Chad Dawson is his next opponent, but everyone from Lucian Bute to the winner of the Showtime "Super Six" tournament, seems to be in Hopkins' future. He has even teased a jump to cruiserweight to take on Antonio Tarver again. Granted, the clock is ticking away, but Hopkins seems intent on making these final bouts of his career the most memorable of them all. **Grade: A-**

ANDRE WARD

WBA Super Middleweight Titleholder

24-0 (13)

TALENT: Ward is a capable, competent fighter who possesses a canny way of altering his style slightly to fit each opponent. He can be bullish and dominating on the inside and can also outbox you from a distance. He's yet to display any serious knockout power, but opponents are usually worn out and battered by the end of a fight with Ward. An unfortunate tendency to lead with his skull has marred a few of his performances, but his mixture of aggression and ring generalship makes for a formidable fighter. **Grade: A-**

ACHIEVEMENT: Thanks to the Showtime "Super Six World Boxing Classic" tournament, Ward has enjoyed some great exposure during the past two years and impressed many observers with dominant wins over Mikkel Kessler (for the WBA belt), Allan Green, and Arthur Abraham. Prior to turning pro, Ward had an excellent amateur career, capped off by an Olympic gold medal win in 2004. As a pro, his early victims included Edison Miranda, Shelby Pudwill, and Rubin Williams. **Grade: B+**

MARKETABILITY: Ward is not a particularly exciting fighter, nor does he have an electric personality. He is the proverbial steak with no sizzle. It's almost impossible to imagine a quiet craftsman like Ward in any sort of pay-per-view situation. After the Super Six is over, he may have even less cachet. Although winning the tourney would be impressive, the idea that he will then skyrocket to fame and fortune is a bit far-fetched. There is a built-in glamour to the tournament, and Ward benefits from it. Without it, he's the invisible man. Granted, he has a solid following in Oakland, and perhaps the loyal hometown fans create a good scene on television, and there are certainly fans who admire his reserved personality. But that doesn't really amount to much in the big picture. Still, if he continues winning, he can gradually accumulate some money and have an enjoyable career. **Grade: B**

SUPPORT SYSTEM: Trainer Virgil Hunter is the real key to Ward's success. Not only is he an accomplished strategist whose belief in Ward unshakable, but he provides Ward with the color and attitude that he sorely lacks. (Example: Hunter, who happens to be Ward's godfather, likes to tell interviewers that Ward will one day be heavyweight champion of the world.) Also of importance to Ward is his religious background. Boxing is filled with religious types, but Ward seems more serious about his beliefs than most. **Grade: A**

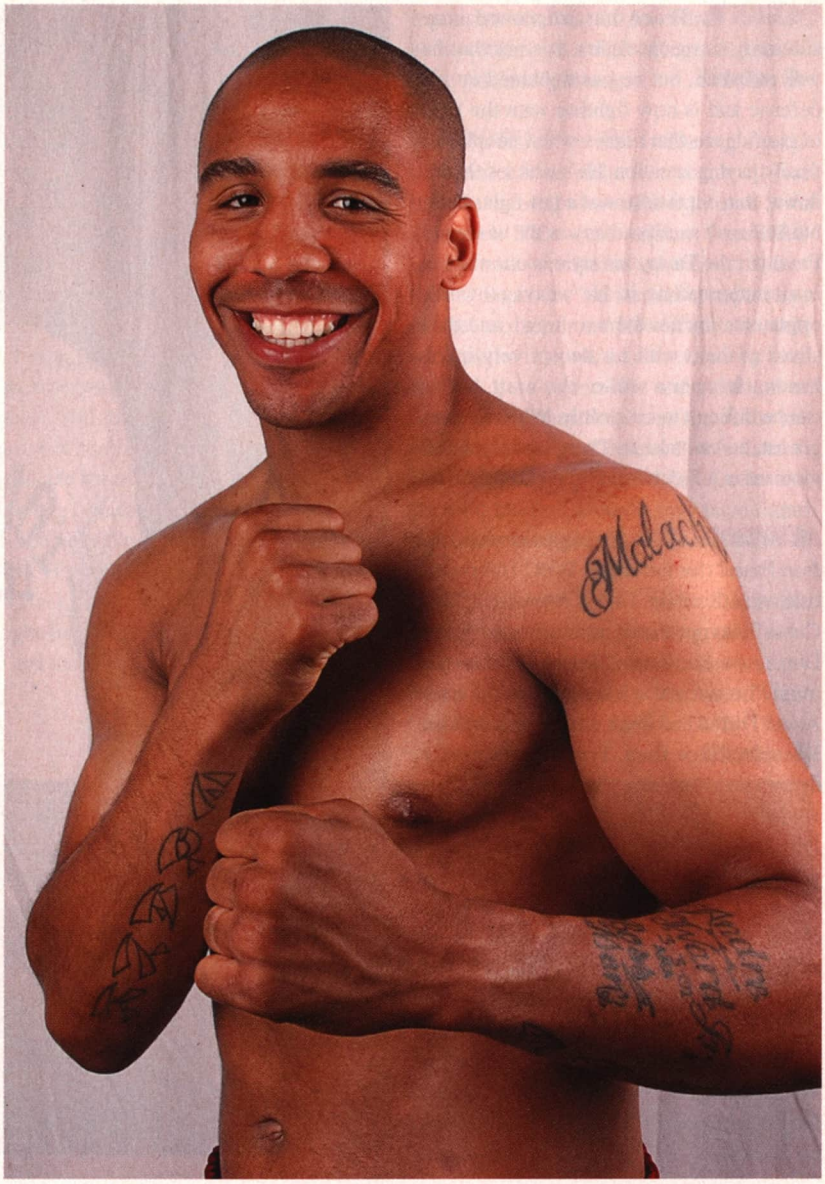

PHOTO BY LAURA DE LA TORRE

GROWTH POTENTIAL: A bout with super middleweight titlist Lucian Bute would be interesting, but much of Ward's future depends on if he beats Carl Froch to decide the Super Six winner and THE RING 168-pound world champion. The best bet is to constantly match him against mouthy opponents. We suggest Ward move a few pounds north to meet Bernard Hopkins. B-Hop can add flavor to any promotion. **Grade: B+**

CARL FROCH

WBC Super Middleweight Titleholder

28-1 (20)

TALENT: Froch has improved considerably in recent fights. It's not that he was ever bad, but he has tightened up his defense and is now fighting with the kind of confidence that comes when people are finally paying attention. He's a bit less hands down, chin out than he was a few fights back, but he hasn't sacrificed any of the of the old Froch sizzle. To say his style is unorthodox is an understatement. He weaves towards opponents, incites them to brawl, and then slices at them with his deceptively quick hands. He's not a will-o'-the-wisp, but he can be difficult to hit cleanly. When he does get hit, he can take it. There's rarely a dull moment in a Froch fight. **Grade: A-**

ACHIEVEMENT: Exciting victories over Jean Pascal (for the vacant WBC 168-pound title) and Jermain Taylor cemented "The Cobra" into our minds as a fighter to watch. During the Showtime "Super Six" tournament, he earned a close decision over Andre Dirrell and lost a close one to Mikkel Kessler. Since then, Froch has soundly defeated Arthur Abraham (to regain the vacant WBC 168-pound title) and Glenn Johnson, moving towards an October 29 bout with Andre Ward to decide the winner of Showtime's tournament and THE RING world championship. Froch's notable victims from earlier in his career include Robin Reid and Brian Magee. He turned pro in 2002 after a fine amateur career, where he was the first British boxer to win a medal at the Senior World Championships. As a young pro, he fought frequently in Derbyshire, Essex, and his hometown of Nottingham, England, before traveling to Hollywood in 2005 to make his American debut, stopping Henry Porras in eight rounds. **Grade: A-**

MARKETABILITY: No matter who wins the "Super Six" finale, it is Froch who is the real find of the tournament. He's a blunt trash talker who can liven up any press junket. He can also be a perfect gentleman when the time is right. The question is whether he can flourish without the tournament showcase. We think he can. **Grade: B+**

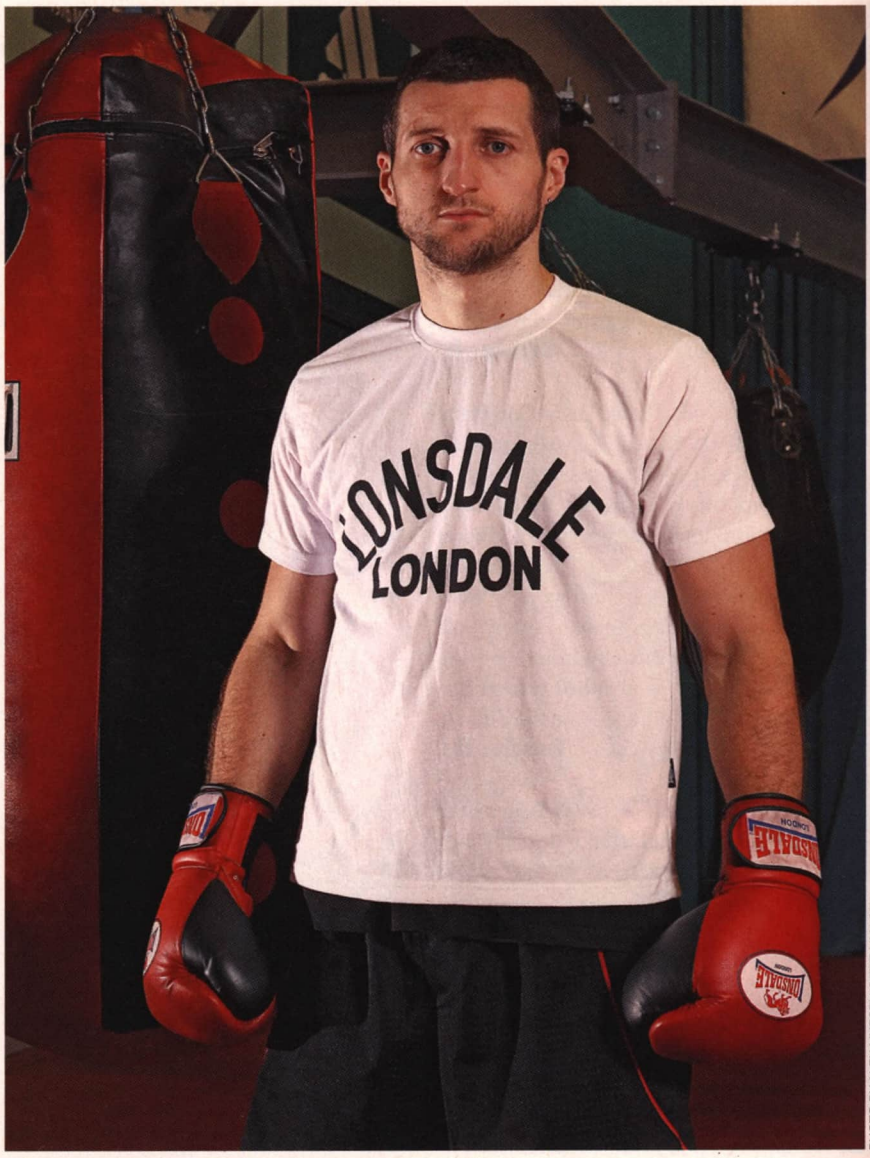

PHOTO BY ALEX LIVESEY/GETTY IMAGES

SUPPORT SYSTEM: Froch recently signed a five-fight deal with Matchroom Sport. Helmed by the father/son team of Barry and Eddie Hearn, Matchroom has connections to the UK's SKY television, which could mean greater exposure for Froch at home in England. The Hearn duo has had some success in British boxing, promoting heavyweight contender Audley Harrison and producing England's innovative Prizefighter series. Froch, currently very hot, is their biggest coup to date. Eddie Hearn told Fanhouse UK last May, "We are going to raise his profile through the roof in the UK and, after the 'Super Six,' he will come home to the welcome he so deserves." **Grade: A**

GROWTH POTENTIAL: Froch, 34, would match well with any of the top 168-pounders, from Lucian Bute to Kessler again. The following he's gained since joining the Super Six would make him a lucrative opponent for just about anybody. It's a great time to be Froch. **Grade: A-**

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

LUCIAN BUTE

IBF Super Middleweight Titleholder

29-0 (24)

TALENT: Bute has come a long way from the first time most of us saw him, which was when he barely survived a last round knockdown at the hands of Librado Andrade. Since that night, he has developed into a formidable offensive specialist. "Le Tembeur" throws brutal bodyshots and can also control a fight with a boxing style that would impress any purist. He has taken opponents out with both hands and has a searing uppercut. At 6'2", he's a tall, fluid southpaw. Questions about his chin and stamina are probably still on the minds of his critics, but no one has gotten close enough to test him lately. **Grade: A**

ACHIEVEMENT: Although the Romanian born Bute has yet to face any A-listers, he has gone undefeated in 29 fights, sending 24 of those opponents home early. He's become a franchise in Montreal, selling out the Bell Centre regularly. Montreal has become one of the hot boxing cities of this era, thanks largely to Bute. Along with beating Alejandro Berrio for the IBF belt in 2007, Bute also has scored wins over reliable warhorses Sakio Bika, William Joppy, Dingaan Thobela, Andrade (twice), and Edison Miranda. Since last year's report, he's scored impressive knockout stoppages of Jesse Brinkley, Brian Magee, and 1996 Olympian Jean Paul Mendy. **Grade: B+**

MARKETABILITY: He's an attraction in Montreal and Romania, but he's probably not going to become a global superstar on the level of a Manny Pacquiao. There are only so many openings available for worldwide legends. Still, Bute has a kind of irresistible charm that a smart publicist should be able to exploit. He has a classy, almost debonair way about him, which is rare for a boxer. Watch him the next time he knocks an opponent down. He strolls to a neutral corner as if he's Paul Henried in *Now, Voyager*, about to light Bette Davis' cigarette. If this were a fair and just world, Bute would be endorsing expensive watches and fine wines. Instead, he'll probably get a deal selling sweat socks. Oh, well. That's boxing. **Grade: A-**

SUPPORT SYSTEM: The big change in Bute's career since last year's all-star list was signing of a multi-fight deal with Showtime. This was a surprise, since HBO had seemed very interested in Bute. Showtime's "Super Six" series had brought most of the top super middleweights to that network, so this was a smart move by Jean Bedard, Bute's promoter and president of Interbox. Trainer Stephane Larouche remains the silent giant behind Bute's success. Having previously trained Eric Lucas and Leonard Dorin, Larouche may have found his perfect protégé in Bute. **Grade: A**

GROWTH POTENTIAL: Showtime should keep Bute busy with good fights. Next up is Glen Johnson on November 5 and then possibly the winner of the Andre Ward-Carl Froch Super Six finale in 2012. **Grade: A**

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

SERGIO MARTINEZ

Middleweight Champion

47-2-2 (26)

TALENT: Martinez' counter left thrown from a crouch has become one of the premiere punches in boxing. How he applies it is a beautiful amalgam of science, timing, and rhythm. Bouncing around opponents with his hands down at his sides, slipping in and out, grinning slightly, perhaps at the anticipation of when his opponent will make a mistake and get suckered into that left, Martinez is more of a matador than any of the dozen or so fighters who have used that particular nickname. Martinez is not a defensive genius, but his constant movement makes him very difficult to hit. His game nature, solid ring smarts, and reliable chin have made him one of the sport's top practitioners. **Grade: A**

ACHIEVEMENT: Just a few years ago, Martinez looked like one of boxing's hard-luck characters. He appeared to have beaten Kermit Cintron, but he got a draw. He then lost a close decision to Paul Williams. Since then, Martinez has experienced a kind of talent spurt. Maybe it's the mythical confidence boost that comes with winning a championship, which he accomplished against Kelly Pavlik. Or maybe those controversial bouts urged him to up his game. Regardless, he destroyed Williams in the rematch, knocking him out in two rounds, and blew away Sergiy Dzinziruk in eight rounds. He currently owns the number-two ranking on THE RING's pound-for-pound list and recognition as Fighter of the Year in 2010. **Grade: A**

MARKETABILITY: It's impossible to dislike the handsome, easy-going Martinez. He even invited a local girl onstage with him at an Atlantic City press conference after learning she had been a victim of bullying in school. Unfortunately, he may end up like most fighters who don't speak English—popular among boxing fans but nowhere else. Still, even if he can't find his way onto American talk shows, he's been getting raves from the boxing media. **Grade: A-**

SUPPORT SYSTEM: He recently signed a long-term contract with DiBella Entertainment, which was perceived as both good and bad. On the plus side, Martinez was showing loyalty to the man who had promoted him all the way to the middleweight championship. On the downside, Lou DiBella has already shown a tendency to say, "No one wants to fight my guy," a statement that sounds a little passive. Manager Sampson Lewkowicz and well-regarded trainer Gabriel Sarmiento round out the team, although Sarmiento missed Martinez' most recent fight because of legal problems. **Grade: B+**

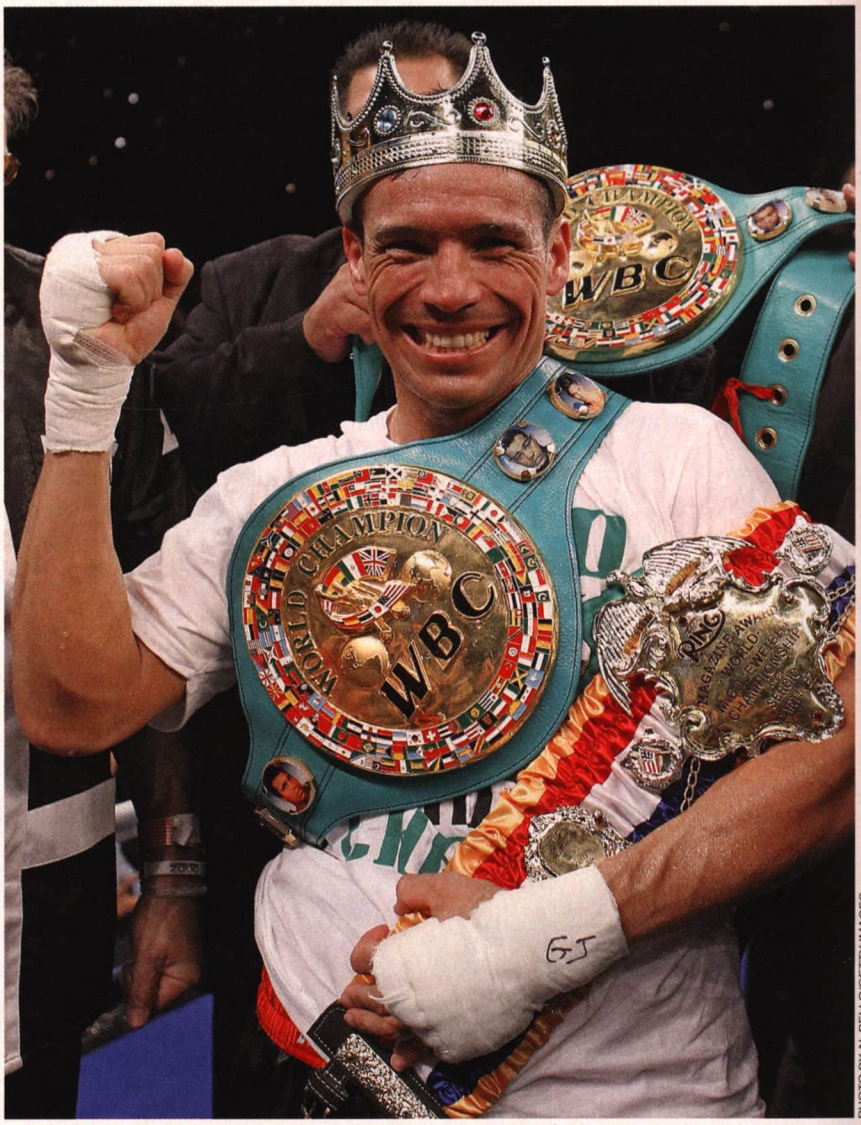

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

GROWTH POTENTIAL: Martinez has a date with the UK's Darren Barker, which seems like a way to kill time until someone better comes along. Unfortunately, Martinez' talent far supersedes his name value. Soon to be 37, Martinez may have to submit to certain demands if he wants a big money fight, like dropping weight to fight a Mayweather, Pacquiao, or Cotto, or climbing to 168 to face Lucian Bute. Otherwise, Martinez may end up as this era's Mike McCallum, another fine fighter who never got the big fights. **Grade: B**

JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR.

WBC Middleweight Titleholder

43-0-1 (30) and 1 no-contest

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

TALENT: Some might say that Chavez' greatest talent is being born into the right family, but he also has a tremendous body attack, particularly with his massive left hook to the ribs and liver. His defense is a bit porous, but he's a game, durable fighter who has rarely taken a backward step during a fight. Against John Duddy in 2010, he showed some wicked combination punches, knocking the tough Irishman right into retirement. **Grade: B+**

ACHIEVEMENT: Being the son of a legend can't be easy, and pursuing a boxing career when you had no amateur experience can't be easy, either. But Chavez Jr. has accomplished this trick with considerable élan. He stays out of the headlines, he fights often, and he recently defeated Sebastian Zbik for the WBC middleweight belt. Against Zbik, he showed a tenacity that was admirable, walking through Zbik's fast hands to administer his own crushing body attack. What we like most about Chavez is that he may not have tons of talent, but he does a lot with what he's been given. He may turn out to be better than we think he is. **Grade: B+**

MARKETABILITY: People outside of Mexico have been hesitant to embrace Chavez because we tend to greet the offspring of a famous fighter with cynicism. But at some point, he's going to take off in a big way. He has a nice mixture of humility and toughness, plus he has a laid back charisma, which is his, not the old man's. The legendary father angle will be played up for a while longer, but he'll eventually show that he's an attraction on his own. HBO is finally airing his fights, which is a good sign. **Grade: A**

SUPPORT SYSTEM: Chavez doesn't have a mere support system, he has an entire army of people holding the crowds back so he can walk through his career without hassles. With the WBC apparently bending over backwards for Chavez and Top Rank treating him like a piece of glass, he's in an enviable position. He also has teamed with trainer Freddie Roach, which can only help a fighter. Still, when all is said and done, he will probably look back on his career and give most of the praise to his dad. They have a very close relationship, and, when the glitter and success fades, they'll still have each other. **Grade: A**

GROWTH POTENTIAL: It's slow growth for Chavez. He's a bit coddled, and, now that he has an alphabet belt, we can probably expect some easy challengers in his immediate future. That might counteract the goodwill shown by HBO recently—the network may not approve of Chavez fighting nobodies, and he could end up back on Top Rank's "Latin Fury" pay-per-views. Mexican favorite Saul Alvarez has been mentioned as an opponent, which could be big. At press time, Chavez was preparing to fight Ronald Hearns, another famous son. **Grade: A-**

MIGUEL COTTO

WBA Junior Middleweight Titleholder

36-2 (29)

TALENT: Cotto has revealed a variety of styles over the years. He was once a serious bodypuncher and knockout artist. He could bang like hell with both hands. Gradually, he developed into a more traditional boxer-puncher. Then he started thinking he was a mover, a dancer, and a flashy combination puncher. Nowadays, he incorporates a little bit of everything from his past. On the flipside, his chin has been suspect, he has been badly cut in several fights, and he has experienced a couple of horrible poundings in the ring. He's still here, though. Give him high marks for resilience. **Grade: A-**

ACHIEVEMENT: For a man who is still relatively young in boxing terms, Cotto has been to hell and back. He turned pro in 2001 and promptly established himself as one of Puerto Rico's all-time favorites, defeating many of the top welterweights and junior welterweights of the era, including Shane Mosley and Zab Judah. He's won titles in three weight classes, with his only losses coming against Antonio Margarito and Manny Pacquiao. Cotto is in the middle of a rebuilding process, with Hall of Fame trainer Emanuel Steward coming onboard to help redefine Cotto's style. Since the addition of Steward, Cotto has defeated Yuri Foreman and Ricardo Mayorga. It's hard to say whether he's all the way back—Foreman had a bad knee, and Mayorga is well past his prime. **Grade: A-**

MARKETABILITY: Because he has never been in a dull bout, Cotto remains a fan favorite, especially in New York where the Puerto Rican population adores him. His humble but hard demeanor hasn't turned him into a household name beyond his ethnic fan base, and his losses have taken some of the luster off his name. Still, he remains one of the few contemporary fighters whose name still means something on a marquee. **Grade: B+**

SUPPORT SYSTEM: Some kudos should go to Bob Arum for not giving up on Cotto. Many promoters would've kicked a fighter to the curb after two violent losses, but Arum showed good faith by putting Cotto in Yankee Stadium to fight Foreman. Is Arum simply trying to get the last drop of milk out of this cash cow? Perhaps. But Cotto is still game, and Top Rank is doing well by him. **Grade: A**

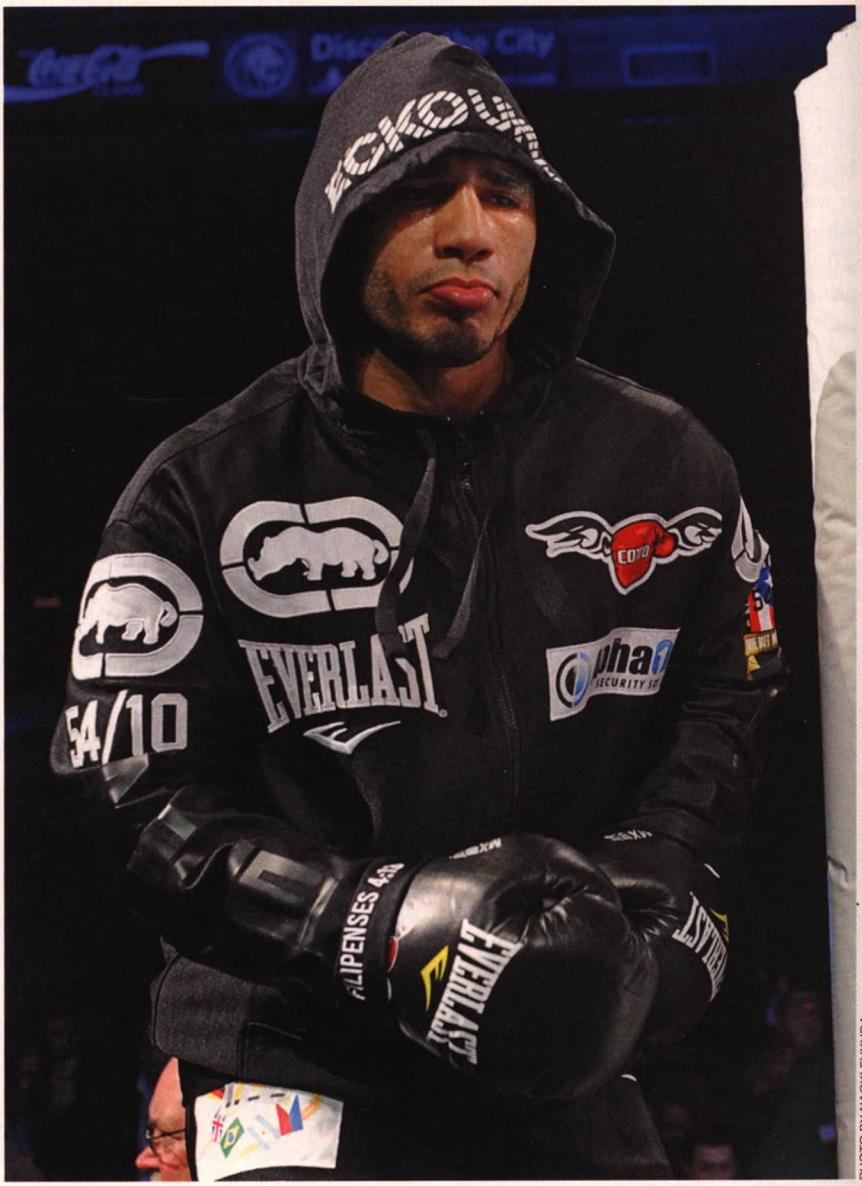

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

GROWTH POTENTIAL: A December meeting with old nemesis Margarito will be one of the key fights of the year, for it will help to establish where Cotto stands now. A decisive win means he not only avenges a painful loss but also puts him into the running for a rematch with Pacquiao. Unfortunately, a loss or even a hard-won decision might mean he's coming to the end of his run. There's only so much punishment a man can take, and Steward has gone on record saying there isn't much left for Cotto to do. **Grade: B**

SAUL ALVAREZ

WBC Junior Middleweight Titleholder

37-0-1 (27)

TALENT: "Canelo" is a heavy-handed fighter who has shown gradual improvement as a boxer. Like some of the great Mexican fighters of the past, he is not spectacular at any one thing but manages to do many things well. Although he scored a devastating knockout of the hardheaded Carlos Baldomir last year, he's more of a grinding fighter than a sizzling kayo artist. He is a bit of a plodder, but he uses his superior strength and brawny physique to wear down opponents. He's also improved as a combination puncher. He still gets hit too often, but, aside from a few wobbly moments, he has held up. He is a work in progress. **Grade: B**

ACHIEVEMENT: In 2004, he won the silver medal at the Junior Mexican National championships, and, in 2005, he became the Junior Mexican National Boxing Champion at the age of 15. After only 20 amateur bouts, he turned pro. Early in his career, he was held to a draw by Jorge Juarez in Tijuana, but, since then, he has suffered no setbacks and has won a bunch of obscure regional belts in Mexican rings. More recently, Alvarez has defeated such sturdy old pros as Jose Cotto, Baldomir, Matthew Hatton, Lovemore N'dou, and Ryan Rhodes. Beating Hatton earned Alvarez the vacant WBC junior middleweight title. Alvarez has also started his own promotional company. **Grade: B+**

MARKETABILITY: Alvarez, 21, is amazingly popular in Mexico, which is a bit of a mystery. Our chief theory is that the golden age of Mexican boxing was coming to an end, with no surefire prospects in sight. Alvarez became the great Mexican hope almost by default: His flaming orange hair and his pale skin give him a unique look, and his sheer youth gives him a "hope for the future" aura. Still, his workmanlike boxing style and lack of English may not work as well in America as it does south of the border. **Grade: A-**

SUPPORT SYSTEM: Alvarez is the youngest of a huge boxing family, which includes former titlist Rigoberto Alvarez (all six Alvarez brothers fought on the same Zapopan, Jalisco, card in 2008). Meanwhile, José and Eddy Reynoso act as Alvarez' managers, trainers, and business partners, promoting his bouts in Mexico. Although he has been romantically linked to glamorous Televisa Deportes reporter and a former Miss Mexico Marisol González, Alvarez enjoys the simple life, riding his horses and enjoying his family's ranch in Juanacatlan. In America, HBO seems very high on Alvarez, and Golden Boy Promotions is working hard to make him a star here, showcasing him in cities like Los Angeles and Anaheim. **Grade: A-**

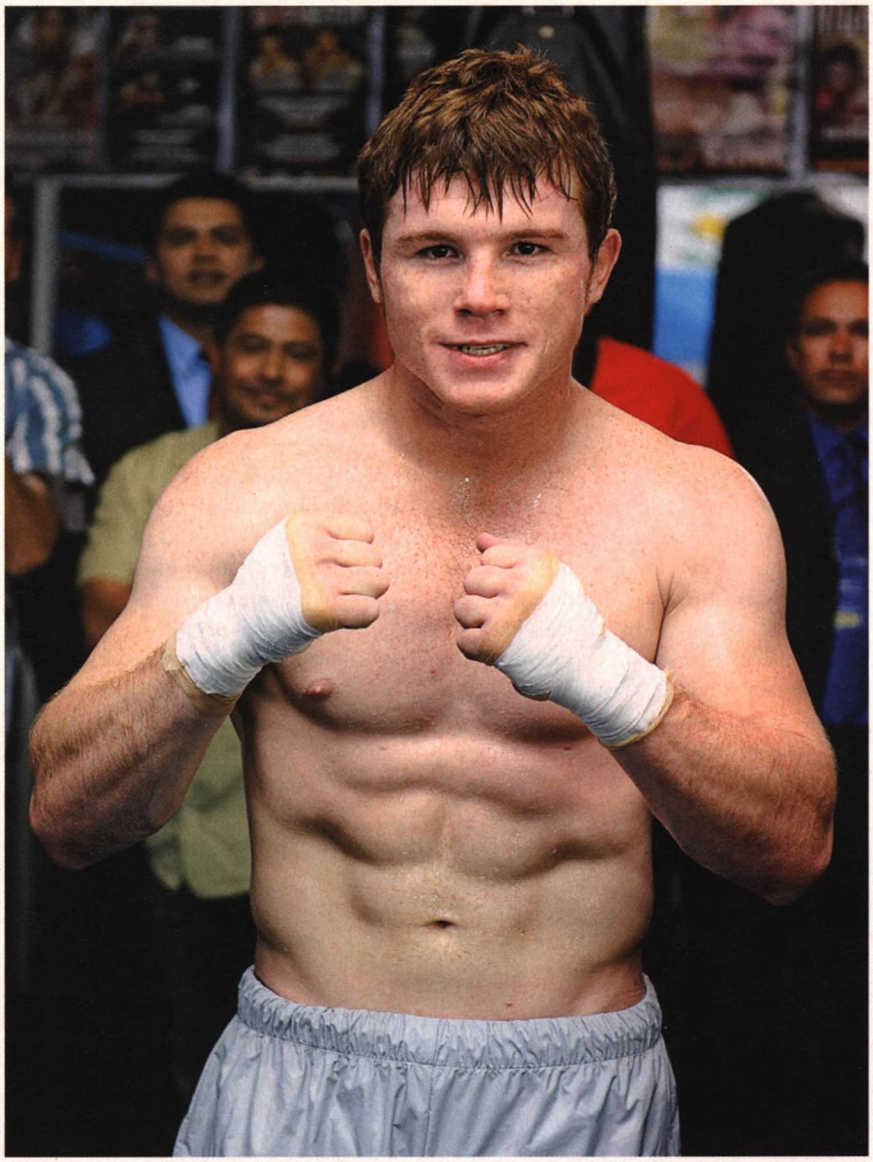

PHOTO BY GENE BLEVINS/HOGAN PHOTOS/GBP

GROWTH POTENTIAL: Alvarez is in the right place at the right time. As the current stars begin to fade, he will be entering his prime. A bout with Alfonso Gomez was set for the Mayweather-Victor Ortiz undercard, and there are rumors of a possible bout with Miguel Cotto in the future. **Grade: A**

MANNY PACQUIAO

Welterweight

53-3-2 (38)

TALENT: He's become one of the towering talents of the era. Recent opponents have seemed downright intimidated by his speed and power. His great footwork, ring generalship, and entertaining style may help him go down as the greatest southpaw and greatest Pinoy fighter of all-time. **Grade: A+**

ACHIEVEMENT: In this era of too many belts and weight divisions, Pacquiao has won more baubles than anyone, eight titles in all, including THE RING belt at featherweight, junior lightweight, and junior welterweight. He's currently THE RING's top-rated welterweight. Add to this his political success, movie roles, hit records, and it seems there's nothing he can't do. His recent cut of the old Dan Hill schlockbuster, "Sometimes When We Touch," cracked the top 10 of America's Secondary Adult Contemporary charts, which sounds like the music business' version of an interim belt. Unfortunately, this also was the first year of blatant Pacquiao backlash in America. Since our last all-star list, he put Antonio Margarito in the hospital and forced Shane Mosley into backpedaling for most of their bout, but even that wasn't enough for Pacquiao's growing legion of critics. Many have tired of his dominance, his bloated stadium shows, and his extra-curricular activities. But the venom only means he is finally at the top of his field—he was ranked alongside New York Yankee Alex Rodriguez as the richest athletes of 2010—and he's experiencing the grand old custom of being torn down by the finicky American public. **Grade: A+**

MARKETABILITY: Pacquiao has had endorsement success in the Philippines, but he hasn't scored well in America. In 2011, Top Rank hired Lucia McKelvey, a seasoned marketing professional who handled Tiger Woods' endorsements during her stint at IMG, to be Top Rank's vice president of business development and marketing. Since then, Pacquiao has signed lucrative contracts with Nike, Hewlett-Packard, and State Street Produce, a San Antonio-based supplier to restaurants across the US. McKelvey estimates Pacquiao could earn up to $50-million in commercial endorsements. **Grade: A+**

SUPPORT SYSTEM: Pacquiao couldn't ask for any better than Bob Arum and Freddie Roach as his promoter and trainer. Considering that Pacquiao actually has people in his vast entourage whose job it is to ward off evil spirits, one would think he has all of the bases covered. Still, false rumors that longtime advisor Michael Koncz had been fired illustrated the inner turmoil in the Pacquiao camp. Some feel Pacquiao's staff has grown too big and may be troublesome in the future. Pacquiao's growing responsibilities as a Filipino congressman, as well as the various dangers of Pacific Rim politics, could also be his undoing. **Grade: A-**

GROWTH POTENTIAL: We are probably looking at the final fights of Pacquiao's career. We may see him less frequently, too, as his political work piles up. Should he get past Juan Manuel Marquez in November, a bout with Floyd Mayweather is still a possibility, although that window is closing. Timothy Bradley has been mentioned, but a rematch with the comebacking Miguel Cotto is more likely. **Grade: A-**

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

FLOYD MAYWEATHER

Welterweight

41-0 (25)

TALENT: There has never been any debate about Mayweather's talent. He's one of the best defensive fighters ever and is absolutely brilliant at figuring out an opponent's style and concocting a way to block and counter anything his opponent does. This aspect of his style, one of the most cerebral in the game, goes largely unappreciated. Although not a big knockout puncher, he punches well enough to hold his own during exchanges. Some are of the opinion that he carries opponents and doesn't try for knockouts or that he is unwilling to take risks, but that may not be the case. Maybe he does the best he can, but he's just not quite as great or quick as he used to be. The reason he takes such long breaks between fights could be because the entire process of his mental style takes a lot out of him. Staying at peak concentration for 12-rounds is no easy task, especially as he enters his mid-30s. **Grade: A+**

ACHIEVEMENT: Considering he started out in the shadow of such stars as Mike Tyson, Oscar De La Hoya, and Roy Jones, Mayweather has come a long way. He's one of the most highly decorated fighters of this era, he's beaten everyone he's faced, and is a pay-per-view success story. That's not bad for a guy who used to seem like little more than a Hector Camacho wannabe, complete with bratty behavior and tacky costumes. He proved us wrong, though, and he became a star. True, he has sometimes avoided opponents, but, in this era, a fighter can get away with things unheard of 30 or 40 years ago. In 1950, he would've fought Antonio Margarito three times. Now, he doesn't have to if he doesn't feel like it. **Grade: A**

MARKETABILITY: He's not likely to grab any endorsements while he's dealing with assault charges and accusations of domestic violence. He had a pretty good run a few years ago as far as non-boxing gigs, but, from now on, it's probably just boxing. **Grade: B+**

SUPPORT SYSTEM: Does anyone ever take Mayweather aside and tell him that his actions outside the ring may cause problems? He thinks he's above the law and, at press time, was playing games with the Nevada courts, blowing off appearances for a defamation suit filed by Manny Pacquiao. Mayweather is more of a pain in the ass than an actual menace, but he's only hurting himself by continuing to act like a petulant 15-year-old. Unfortunately, he's surrounded by yes-men. He could also use a good accountant to keep the IRS off his back. **Grade: Needs Improvement**

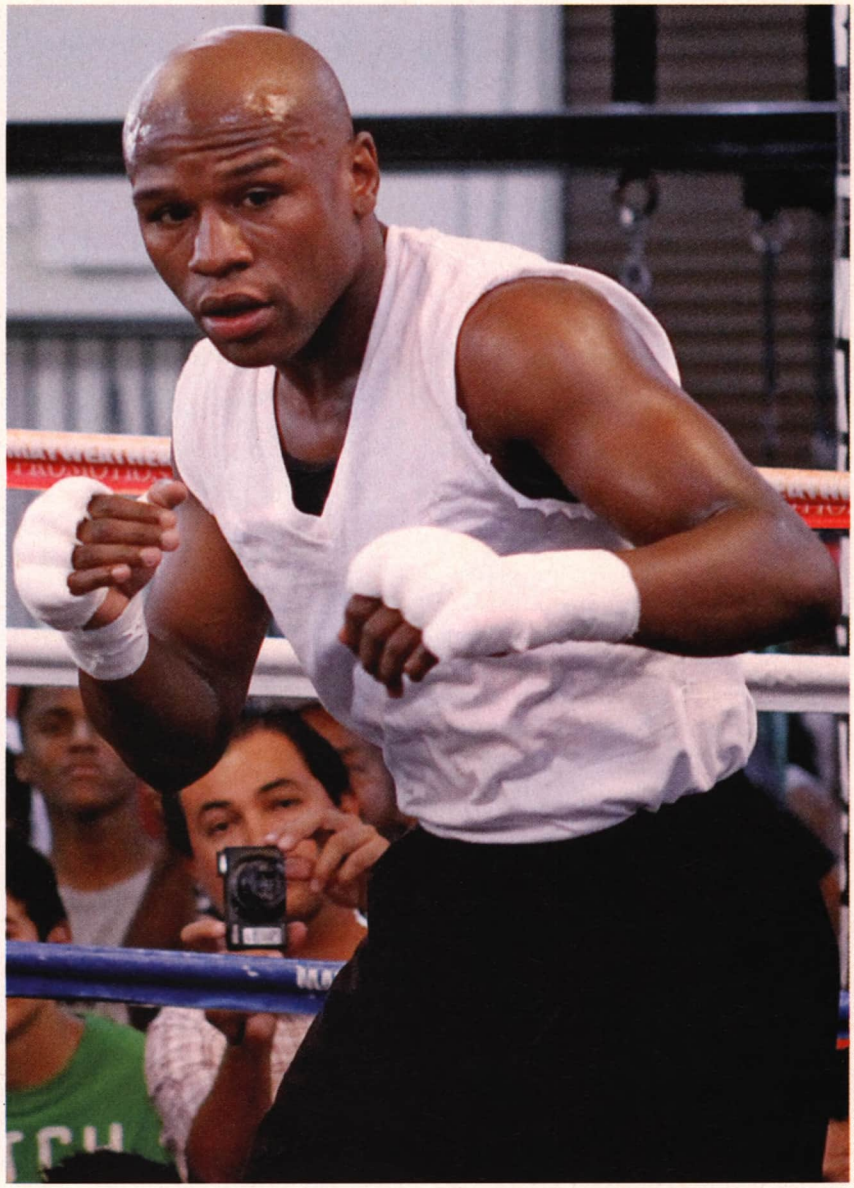

PHOTO BY SCOTT HEAVEY/GETTY IMAGES

GROWTH POTENTIAL: Provided he wins his September bout with Victor Ortiz, there is always the long-awaited Manny Pacquiao bout. He's also said something about fighting Amir Khan in England. Although Mayweather's talk has to be taken with a grain of salt, his growing legal fees may actually inspire him to start fighting more than once every 16 months. **Grade: B+**

AMIR KHAN

WBA/IBF Junior Welterweight Titleholder

26-1 (18)

TALENT: Khan has good hand speed, reasonable power, a strong body attack, and underrated footwork. He's very smart about positioning himself to avoid getting hit. He has even shown a willingness to mix it up, as his back-alley slugfest with Marcos Maidana showed us last year. Against Zab Judah in July, he looked like a whirling dervish, too fast even for Judah, who is used to being the faster guy in the ring. Khan may still look awkward at times, but he's on the way to becoming a complete fighter **Grade: A-**

ACHIEVEMENT: Since he began his quest to "make it in America," Khan has been impressive. Starting with a New York debut that saw him stop Paul Malignaggi, he has since beaten Maidana on points, returned to England to beat Paul McCloskey (Tech. Dec. 6), and put in a dominating performance against Judah. A first-round knockout loss to Breidis Prescott in 2008 gave ammo to critics who had pegged Khan as a chinny, sloppy fighter, but he has been very impressive since that shocking setback. After stopping the aging Marco Antonio Barrera in five, he defeated Andriy Kotelnyk by decision to win the WBA lightweight belt. His first defense was a one round dusting of Dmitriy Salita. Beating Judah added the IBF 140-pound title to his alphabet collection. **Grade: B+**

MARKETABILITY: Khan has a confident way about him, which occasionally reads as cocky, but his puppy dog looks and a boyish demeanor could work well in America. He was already an icon for Muslim fans in the UK and has been called 'the Muslim-Pakistani Oscar De La Hoya." The youngest Brit to win an Olympic medal, he scored a major endorsement deal with Reebok in 2006 and has been an ambassador for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children since 2004. He's yet to crack the American market in any noticeable way and he hasn't lived up to the initial hype around him, but he's only 24. A recent appearance on *Lopez Tonight* showed that he could play the publicity game as well as anybody. **Grade: A-**

PHOTO BY LANDRY MAJOR/GETTY IMAGES

SUPPORT SYSTEM: Freddie Roach trains him. Golden Boy promotes him. Manny Pacquiao spars with him. But Khan may need someone to keep an eye on him while he is living in Hollywood. Although 2011 has been quiet for Khan, there had previously been speeding fines, nightclub incidents, a 2009 complaint of sexual harassment, and a 2010 report that he sent lewd text-messages of himself to model Leanne Crow. The scandal-loving UK press may have overblown these incidents, but someone should remind Khan that Mike Tyson started out with fender benders and nightclub gropes. **Grade: B+**

GROWTH POTENTIAL: Whether it's a rematch with Maidana or Prescott, a junior welterweight unification bout with fellow titleholder Timothy Bradley, or a step up to 147 for a bout with Floyd Mayweather, Khan's upside is huge. **Grade: A**

JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ

Lightweight Champion

53-5-1 (39)

TALENT: An excellent counter puncher, Marquez' greatest talent is analyzing opponents and taking advantage of their mistakes. He can punch with authority, mix boxing with brawling, and is always in top shape. If he has a weakness, it's that he gets dropped too often. For a guy with so much ring savvy, he spends a lot of time on his backside. He has also shown a tendency to underperform in the past, giving away rounds when he should've been pressing. In recent years, he's been far more aggressive. **Grade: A**

ACHIEVEMENT: There was a time when Marquez was carving out a career under the radar, appearing mostly on Spanish cable programs or with little fanfare on HBO. He toiled in the shadows of more famous Mexican fighters, bungled a title shot against Freddie Norwood, and was even in the shadow of his younger brother, Rafael. But after a draw with Manny Pacquiao in 2004, business picked up. Since then, he has defeated the likes of Marco Antonio Barrera, Rocky Juarez, Juan Diaz (twice), and Michael Katsidis. He's lost a few, including a split decision to Pacquiao in 2008 and a loss at welterweight to Floyd Mayweather in 2009, but he remains one of the era's most highly respected fighters. His first bout with Diaz was chosen as THE RING's 2009 Fight of the Year; he has worn alphabet belts in three weight divisions and has been recognized as The RING's lightweight champion since beating Joel Casamayor in 2008. **Grade: A**

MARKETABILITY: Marquez has the Mexican legend thing going for him, but he's generally the B-side of the major promotions he's been in. He's never been colorful enough to catch on in a really big way. **Grade: B**

SUPPORT SYSTEM: Sometimes it seems Marquez has succeeded despite his own camp. Manager/trainer Ignacio Beristain has often allowed pride and stubbornness to derail Marquez' progress.

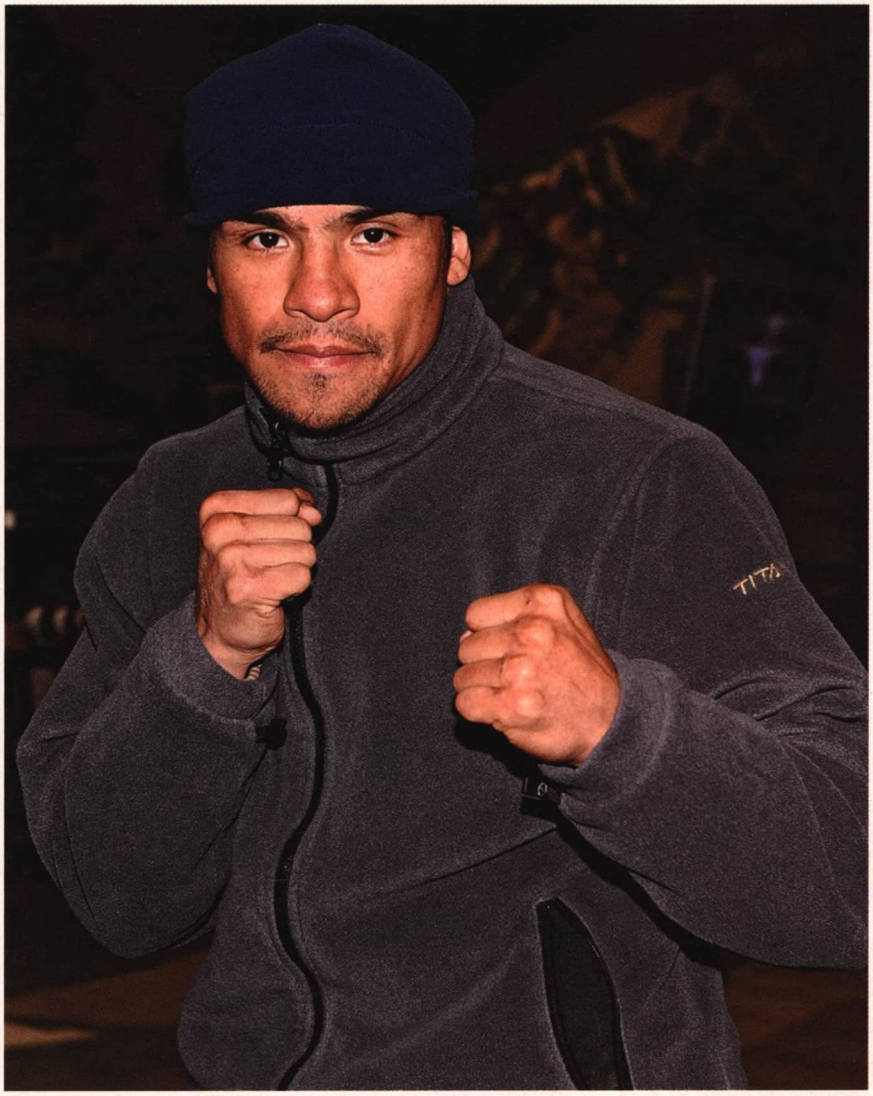

PHOTO BY GENE BLEVINS/HOGAN PHOTOS/GBP

In 2006, a rematch with Pacquiao was turned down because Nacho wanted more money. They instead went to Indonesia where Marquez fought national hero Chris John for considerably less money and lost. Marquez could've fought Pacquiao last year, but he allegedly priced himself out again. This allowed Pacquiao to fight Shane Mosley instead. After that, Marquez was rudderless, preparing to fight everyone from Amir Khan to Erik Morales to David Diaz. That a third bout with Pacquiao finally materialized is close to a miracle. Also, whoever encouraged him to drink his own urine on HBO ought to be fired. **Grade: B**

GROWTH POTENTIAL: Marquez, 38, had his hands full with the likes of Katsidis and Diaz. He still has plenty left, but he's showing his age. We learned nothing from a recent tune-up against Likar Ramos because Ramos fell, rather unconvincingly, in one round. Marquez' November bout with Pacquiao will either vindicate him or serve as the first step towards retirement. It's been one hell of a career, but there's not much growth left. **Grade: B-**

BRANDON RIOS

Lightweight

28-0-1 (21)

TALENT: As early as his ninth pro fight, Rios was showing signs of things to come, when he was dropped twice in the first round by Joel Ortega only to come back and drop Ortega in the fifth and score a knockout win. Whether or not Rios is the new Arturo Gatti, as some have dubbed him, remains to be seen. What we know for certain is that he's a rock-fisted firebrand with a demonic left hook who is willing to go toe-to-toe with anybody. **Grade: B+**

ACHIEVEMENT: After an extensive amateur career, which included his being selected as an alternate for the 2004 Olympic Team, Rios made his pro debut in July of '04. He won his first 18 bouts before being held to a draw by Manuel Perez. Rios avenged the draw one year later with a seventh round TKO, but his lack of discipline was creating bad feelings within his camp. Often in jail for fighting in public, Rios turned his life around in 2009 and began focusing on his boxing career. It was Rios' impressive showing against Anthony Peterson on HBO that caught the eye of the boxing world, as he dropped the more experienced Peterson and dominated him for six rounds before Peterson fouled out, giving Rios the win by disqualification. Since then, Rios has won three straight, including a dramatic, come-from-behind kayo of Miguel Acosta for one of the numerous WBA lightweight titles, and a three-round stoppage of Urbano Antillon, which will be remembered as one of the better action fights of 2011. **Grade: B**

MARKETABILITY: Rios is a vibrant, occasionally vulgar, 25-year-old slugger who likes to talk a little trash and stir things up. Although he considers himself a friendly guy who likes to have fun, he sometimes alienates people with his punkish personality. Still, it shouldn't be difficult to showcase a young fighter with such a ferocious style. **Grade: B+**

SUPPORT SYSTEM: Top Rank has done a great job introducing Rios to fans, placing him on key undercards, such as when he stopped Omri Lowther on the Manny Pacquiao-Antonio Margarito undercard at Cowboys Stadium. Rios also comes from the ever-growing Oxnard boxing contingent, his trainer being former super featherweight titlist Roberto Garcia. Rios' wife, Vicky, should also get some credit for his rise, for she has unquestionably helped him to temper his once turbulent personal life. **Grade: B+**

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

GROWTH POTENTIAL: In Rios' mind, he's ready for Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather—and maybe even Henry Armstrong—but before Rios can invade the welterweight class, there's plenty for him to do at 135 and 140. A November bout on the Pacquiao-Juan Manuel Marquez undercard had been set against an opponent unknown at press time. Here's hoping he doesn't waste too much time on mandatory defenses forced on him by the WBA or get stuck on the Top Rank merry-go-round of fighting only stablemates

Grade: A-

YURIORKIS GAMBOA

Featherweight

20-0 (16)

TALENT: Gamboa overwhelms opponents with his whirlwind attacks. When his hands start flying, his bouts become mismatches. At times, he's been labeled as reckless and off balance, and he's suffered many flash knockdowns. But when he focuses on more traditional boxing methods, he tends to leave the customers disappointed. Fortunately for thrill-happy fight fans, he knows that excitement pays the bills. Still, it's good to know he also can win rounds the scientific way. **Grade: A-**

ACHIEVEMENT: Gamboa allegedly had 250 amateur bouts, winning a flyweight gold medal for Cuba in the 2004 Olympics. As a pro, he has beaten some rugged competitors, including Rogers Mtagwa, Orlando Salido, and Jorge Solis. He briefly wore the IBF and WBA featherweight belts and is currently THE RING's top-rated featherweight. **Grade: B+**

MARKETABILITY: Featherweights are a hard sell when they aren't Mexican, but Gamboa already has the attention of hardcore fans and has become a favorite of the boxing media. Still, there seems to be a curse around Cuban fighters who come to America. Some of them do well—Joel Casamayor comes to mind—but most never quite live up to their amateur reputations. Gamboa, though, seems a little more magical than most, possessing the kind of explosiveness that can take your breath away. If anyone can break the Cuban jinx and become a star in America, it's "The Guantanamo Cyclone." **Grade: B+**

SUPPORT SYSTEM: Ahmet Oner of Germany serves as Gamboa's manager. Oner's master move was to fire Gamboa's original trainer and bring in Ismael Salas to help tighten up Gamboa's defense. Salas, another Guantanamo native who was Gamboa's amateur coach, has a special bond with Gamboa. But while Oner has done well by Gamboa so far, he remains a bit of a mystery. Oner is known for temper tantrums and odd behavior. He once rang a timekeeper's bell himself when one of his fighters was hurt and has been known to bite his own hands in moments of anger. He has a bully's reputation, and, in 2009, an unknown assailant shot him in the leg. Top Rank has brought Gamboa along nicely, and Salas is a legendary Cuban trainer, but Oner is a wild card. How long before he starts butting heads with Top Rank over Gamboa's future? **Grade: A-**

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

GROWTH POTENTIAL: Gamboa, soon to be 30, needs to make something happen. Fortunately, he's in a weight class that is jammed-up and jelly tight with talent. Provided he gets past former titlist Daniel Ponce De Leon in September, there's Mikey Garcia and Cristobal Cruz to consider. If Juan Manuel Lopez can get back on the winning track, a Gamboa-Lopez bout would still be very exciting and lucrative. If Chris John ever comes back to America, which is doubtful since he had his hands full with Rocky Juarez, a John-Gamboa bout would possibly crown a RING champion at featherweight. **Grade: A-**

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA

WBC Super Bantamweight Titleholder

38-4-3 (24)

TALENT: A booming left cross is Nishioka's best punch, but his short right hook isn't bad, either. Known throughout his career for his quickness and power, he has become more patient and methodical in recent fights. His other chief asset is his strength of mind. This is a fighter who has overcome injuries, survived knockdowns, and returned from heartbreaking defeats. They do not come any more determined than Nishioka. **Grade: A**

ACHIEVEMENT: The 35-year-old "Speed King" is perhaps Japan's most popular fighter. Although he earned much notice in his early years as a spectacular knockout artist, it was a four-bout series with the highly regarded Veerapol Sahaprom that saw Nishioka become a sort of folk hero. He went 0-2-2 in an effort to win the WBC 118-pound title, but his gutsy performances turned him into a nationally beloved underdog who couldn't quite reach the mountaintop. Refusing to retire, Nishioka has since won 15 consecutive bouts. It is this rebirth, along with his monkish devotion to training, which has won the hearts of Japanese fans. His most recent conquests include Ivan Hernandez, Jhonny Gonzalez, and Genero Garcia for full recognition as WBC super bantamweight titlist. He'd previously won that group's "interim" title by defeating Napapol Kiatisakchokchai, who happened to be a protégé of the now retired Sahaprom. After the bout, won by Nishioka via unanimous decision, the old rivals Sahaprom and Nishioka embraced in a show of sportsmanship that rocked the crowd in Japan's Pacifico Yokohama center. **Grade: A-**

MARKETABILITY: Because he is a serious puncher, he should be easier to market than the last Asian hero to come to America, the talented but soft-hitting Chris John. For those in need of further convincing, check Nishioka on YouTube. His opponents fall as if they've been shot. Americans will definitely be interested in this guy. (He has fought in Las Vegas twice before, scoring easy knockouts in 2002 and 2006, the former on the undercard of Mayweather-Castillo II.) Despite his popularity in Japan, Nishioka hasn't garnered any big endorsement deals due to Japanese sponsors being hesitant to use boxers to sell their goods. Nishioka does, however, provide ringside commentary on WOWOW, a top Japanese pay TV network. **Grade: B+**

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

SUPPORT SYSTEM: Yūichi Kasai, a former featherweight of some renown, trains Nishioka. What makes Kasai unique is that he lived and trained in Las Vegas for some time, learning from trainer Miguel Diaz, who has trained the likes of Erik Morales. Some of this South American-Latino style has rubbed off on the Kasai-Nishioka combo. **Grade: A**

GROWTH POTENTIAL: Japanese promoter Akihiko Honda of Teiken Boxing is teaming with Top Rank to bring Nishioka to America again, this time as a main eventer. Should Nishioka get past his October date with Rafael Marquez, he is being considered for a bout with Nonito Donaire. At 35, Nishioka is finally in line for some American exposure. **Grade: B+**

NONITO DONAIRE

WBC/WBO Bantamweight Titleholder

26-1 (18)

TALENT: He may have the best left hook in the game right now. Rapier-quick and deadly accurate, heaven help the poor sap who walks into it. Sure, everything else about Donaire is solid, including his speed and footwork, but his left arm seems like it was grafted onto him from the body of some long gone Hall of Famer. He has plenty of ring smarts and doesn't make many mistakes, except for occasionally thinking he can fight as a southpaw. He's much more convincing in a conventional stance, which allows his left hook to explode on opponents like a bear trap. **Grade: A**

ACHIEVEMENT: Donaire is THE RING's top-rated bantamweight and currently sits in the number three spot on our pound-for-pound list. Since our last All-Star inventory, he proved he belonged here again with a sensational kayo victory over highly touted veteran and titlist Fernando Montiel. Although boxing politics and contract problems have stalled Donaire's progress, he has won alphabet titles in two weight classes and is generally considered the second best fighter of Filipino origin currently working. He got on the map with his awesome fifth-round knockout of Vic Darchinyan, which earned Donaire a flyweight title and was chosen as THE RING's Knockout of the Year for 2007. **Grade: A**

MARKETABILITY: The win over Montiel revived interest in him, just when it looked like he was never going to live up to the hype that came after demolishing Darchinyan. He could become a major HBO fighter. **GRADE: A-**

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

SUPPORT SYSTEM: After declaring himself a free agent and aligning himself with Golden Boy, Donaire signed a multi-year deal with Top Rank, where he has been since 2008. Donaire, outspoken and a bit impatient to get his career rolling, has never been reticent about creating controversy. This year, he added Victor Conte, former head of BALCO, to assist with his training. Conte is no longer in the steroid and money laundering rackets, but has introduced Donaire to a "hypoxicator machine," a piece of equipment that fits over the face like a WWI gas mask and allegedly increases red blood cells to increase stamina. It's not illegal, yet, and, if it's okay with Donaire, it's okay with us. **Grade: A-**

GROWTH POTENTIAL: The key word is "growth," since Donaire's camp seems to think he can fight as heavy as 135. That may seem like crazy talk, but Pacquiao pulled the same trick, going from flyweight to lightweight and then welterweight. But in trying to match Pacquiao, Donaire could be making a mistake. Pacquiao made the jumps because there were big money opponents in higher weight classes. There are no Miguel Cottos or Ricky Hattons or Oscar De La Hoyas waiting for Donaire. He'll have to be content with the likes of Jorge Arce, "JuanMa" Lopez, and Yuriorkis Gamboa. **Grade: A**

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM

Flyweight Champion

82-3-1 (45)

TALENT: Wonjongkam is an intelligent southpaw boxer with decent power in his left. He's wily, too, resting when the 100-degree heat of Thai rings becomes unbearable, saving his energy for late-round flurries. A recent bout with Japan's Takuya Kogawa was a perfect example. Realizing he was facing a younger, faster man, Wonjongkam bided his time, countered effectively, and came on late to win the bout on points. **Grade: A**

ACHIEVEMENT: The majority of his opponents have been inexperienced youngsters brought in to make the champ look good, but, in between easy marks, he's beaten some solid fighters, including Hussein Hussein, Gilberto Keb Baas, Malcolm Tunacao, and Julio Cesar Miranda. Sure, four bouts with Randy "The Destroyer" Mangubat is not what keeps him on THE RING's pound-for-pound list. But his four bout series with Daisuke Naito was memorable, and his 2010 majority decision win over hotshot Koki Kameda showed that he was more than just a carefully promoted property. His first reign as WBC flyweight titleholder lasted from 2001 to '07 and included 17 title defenses; he owns the record for scoring the quickest knockout in a flyweight title bout (34 seconds), and beating Kameda brought him the WBC belt again, plus recognition as THE RING flyweight champion. Combine all of this with his being the toast of Thai boxing, and Wonjongkam may be heading for the International Boxing Hall of Fame. **Grade: A**

MARKETABILITY: We aren't going to see him on HBO's *24/7*, but not all fighters aspire to have their personal lives filmed while Liev Schreiber provides a deadpan voiceover. He remains a product of Thailand's boxing system, hitting every nook and cranny of the country as if to make sure every citizen gets a chance to see him. To Americans, he seems more like a traveling carnival attraction than an athlete, but, in Thailand, he's revered. He published an autobiography in 2007, and his fights are carried by Thai television's largest channels, Thailand 3 and Thailand 7.

Grade: A (in Thailand) **C** (in America)

PHOTO BY SCOTT MALLON

SUPPORT SYSTEM: Wirat Wachirarattanawong, who is to Thai flyweights what Don King once was to American heavyweights, has served as Wonjongkam's manager/promoter for years. Some think this requires nothing more than providing Wonjongkam with soft opponents, but Wachirarattanawong has done remarkable work keeping the show going long after Wonjongkam was thought to be in decline. Recently, Wonjongkam's camp capitulated to a WBC mandate and agreed to pit their star against Mexico's Edgar Sosa. There was much wrangling over where the bout would take place, with Sosa's people leery of fighting a Thai icon in Thailand. Can you guess where the bout will be held? Hint: Not Mexico. **Grade: A-**

GROWTH POTENTIAL: Retirement is near. If Wonjongkam, 34, gets past former titlist Sosa, there may be some more bouts in Thailand, but not many. Wachirarattanawong, like a music mogul searching for a new boy band, has almost certainly begun grooming Wonjongkam's replacement. **Grade: B**

GIOVANI SEGURA

Junior Flyweight Champion

28-1-1 (24)

TALENT: Segura works on the premise that if he keeps throwing punches, some will land. This swarming, all-action style has worked well for him. He can take even the best boxers out of their game plan, as all they can do is stand their ground and try fruitlessly to fight back. At times, he seems too hungry for the knockout, and he gets his chin checked regularly, but the full-blast formula has yielded fantastic results. **Grade: B+**

ACHIEVEMENT: After a very brief and unexceptional amateur career, Segura turned pro in 2003. Although he was clumsy and inexperienced, lacking in discipline, and unsure of which weight division he should focus on, his record includes victories over some quality opponents, including Carlos Tamara and former titlist Daniel Reyes. He also proved himself to be a monster in rematches—a draw with Benjamin Garcia was later avenged via first-round knockout and then by split decision. Then, after losing on points to flyweight titlist Cesar Canchila, he stopped Canchila in the rematch to take the WBA belt. After defending the WBA title three times, he met highly regarded WBO titleholder Ivan Calderon, stopping him in seven to unify the belts and earn recognition as THE RING's junior flyweight champion. The bout was also chosen as our Fight of The Year for 2010. Since then, he has defeated Manuel Vargas, Calderon a second time, and Eddy Zuniga. **Grade: A-**

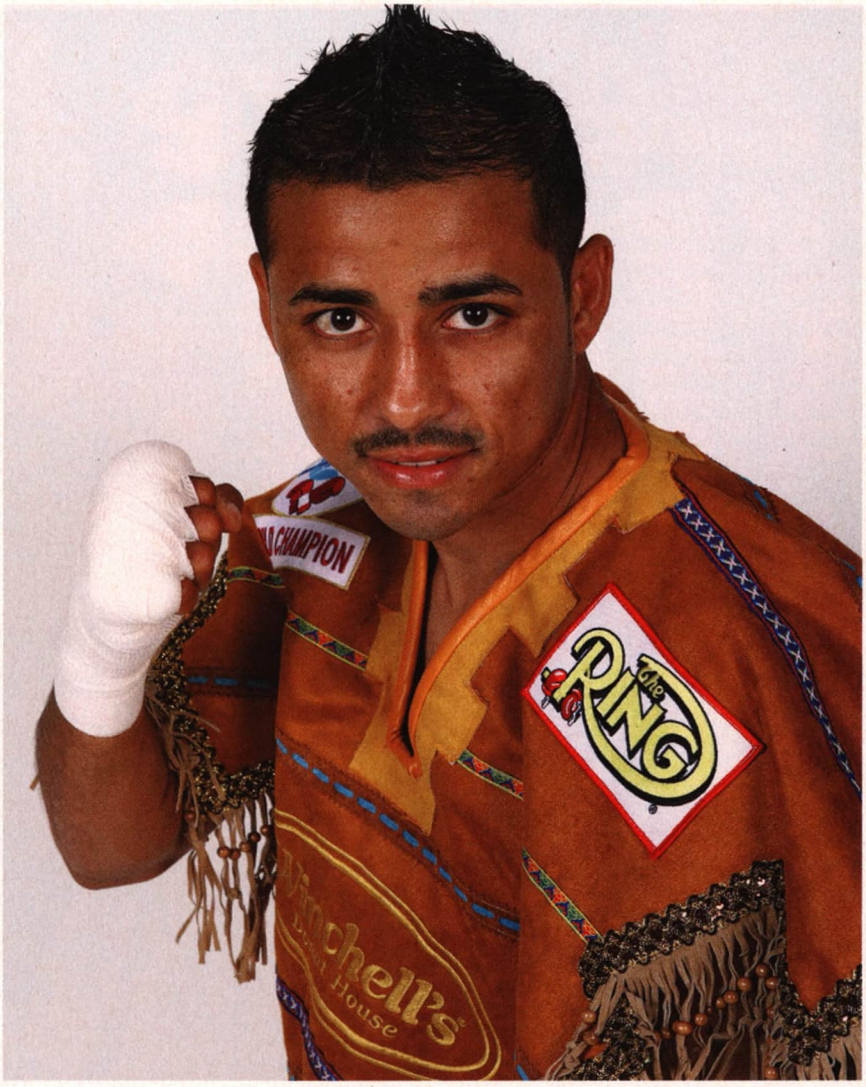

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

MARKETABILITY: Hardcore fans know Segura, 29, but it's difficult for fighters in the lightest weight divisions to sell tickets in America. Still, he might build up a grass roots following that could add up. Segura is promoted by Top Rank, which means he will eventually end up on some bigger pay-per-view events, if only on the undercard. Everyone loves a puncher. **Grade: B+**

SUPPORT SYSTEM: He is trained by Javier Capetillo, known now and forever for the hand-wrapping scandal involving Antonio Margarito. The notorious Capetillo overshadows Segura's real trainer of record, former bantamweight journeyman Lucilo Nolasco. Known as a fighter who battled a who's who of 1980s bantamweights, Nolasco has trained Segura since his earliest days, except for a time when the job was helmed by the late Manuel "Chato" Robles. Richard Mota, owner of La Azteca Boxing Club of Bell California, manages Segura. Some think the still raw Segura could benefit from better trainers, but Segura came to the sport late and may never look like Floyd Mayweather. Also, he seems happy with his group. **Grade: B+**

GROWTH POTENTIAL: He has already complained that making 108 pounds has become difficult, so we can expect a move north to 112. A bout with Brian Viloria was being discussed at press time. Other interesting opponents would be WBA flyweight boss Hernan Marquez, former titlist Luis Concepcion, and WBA 108-pound beltholder Roman "El Chocolates" Gonzalez. He's also called out Ulises Solis. These aren't million-dollar dream fights, but they are fights on which to build a reputation. **Grade: A-**

IS DAWSON B-HO

If The Hands Of Time Can't Beat

P'S BUZZ KILLER?

Hopkins, A Nightmare Style Might

By Eric Raskin

The worst night of Chad Dawson's boxing career paved the way for one of the best nights of Bernard Hopkins'. Dawson was upset, via 11-round technical decision, in a showdown with Jean Pascal for the vacant RING light heavyweight championship. Pascal immediately called out Hopkins, live on HBO. The then-45-year-old Hopkins, as he likes to tell the story, sat up straight in his rocking chair, put in his dentures, and sprang into action. Two fights with Pascal later—first a draw in which most felt the title should have changed hands and then a clear-cut win for B-Hop in the rematch—Hopkins became the oldest man ever to win a major title and the king of the 175-pound division for a second time at age 46.

This unimaginable success at such an advanced age, this significant layering upon his legacy, these new heights of

PHOTO BY JEFF FUSCO/HOGAN PHOTOS/GBP

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PHOTO BY JEFF FUSCO/HOGAN PHOTOS/GBP

popularity that come with outfighting men who could be his children, none of it would have happened if not for Dawson faltering on August 14, 2010, against Pascal.

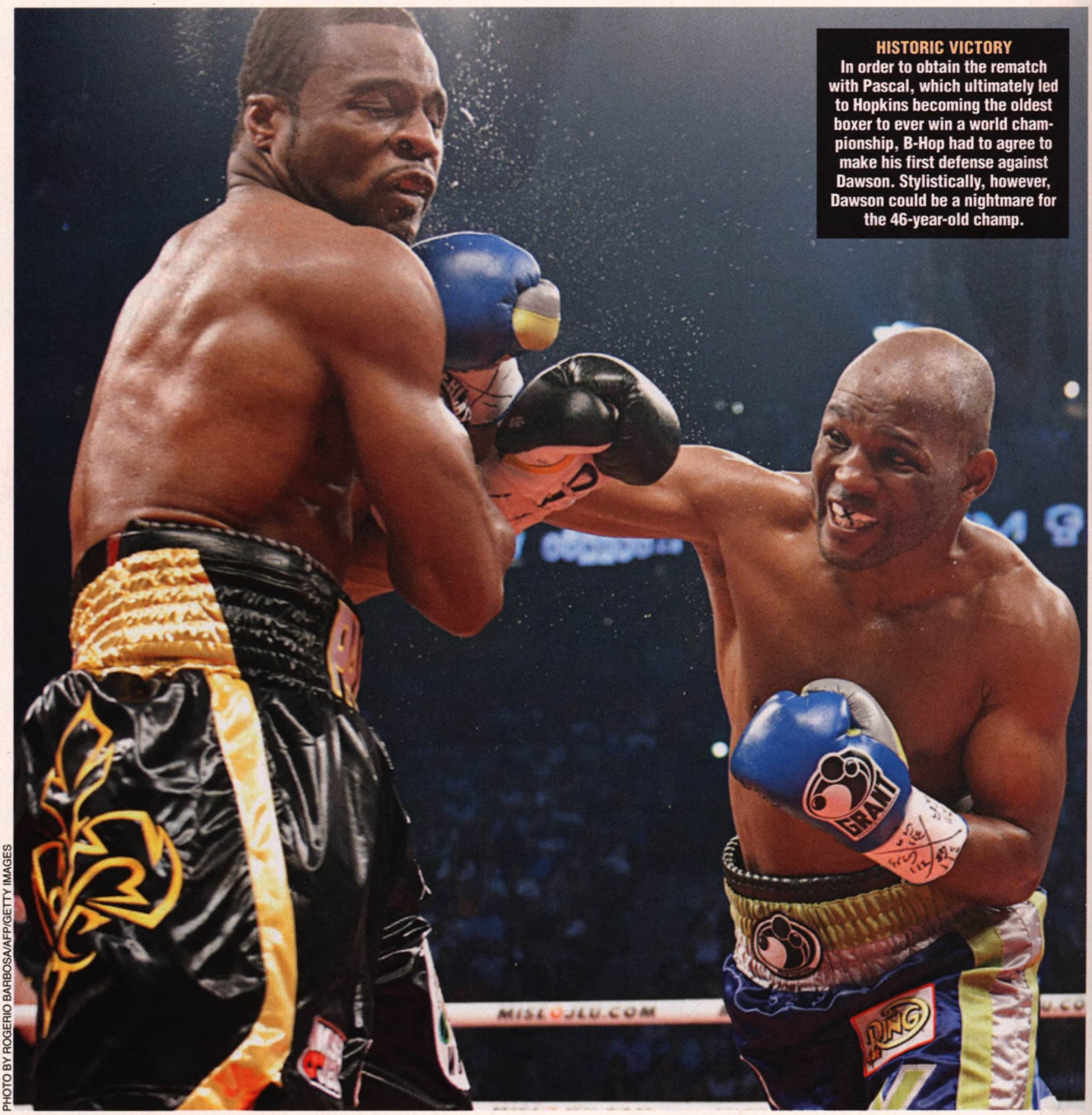
Cliff Huxtable famously said to his son Theo during the first season of *The Cosby Show*, "I brought you into this world, and I'll take you out!" Dawson, in an indirect way, brought Hopkins to his place atop the light heavyweight mountain. On October 15, "Bad Chad" will have the chance to take him out.

And why is Dawson getting that chance? Because Hopkins' hands were tied. In order to get his rematch with Pascal, "The Executioner" had to sign a document stating that if he won, he'd fight Dawson next. Everybody knows that defending his championship against the 29-year-old, 6'1" southpaw Dawson wouldn't have been B-Hop's first choice. When you're offered vacation packages to Aruba, Paris, Maui, or Flint, Michigan, maybe you don't know for sure where you're going, but you know immediately where you're *not* going.

Hopkins is currently enjoying an Indian summer arguably unsurpassed in boxing history. But Dawson just might represent an overnight 50-degree temperature drop.

In Hopkins' interview with THE RING in the September 2011 issue, when he was asked about promoter Richard Schaefer's statement that he was "looking for loopholes" to avoid Dawson, Hopkins tried to play it off as Schaefer making a joke. But nobody's buying that. Here was what Hopkins tweeted after his win over Pascal in response to various opponents being suggested: "i hv 2 honor my agreement with Chad first. Its me n him next." Doesn't sound like Hopkins sprang enthusiastically from his rocking chair for this one.

You can't help but notice how Hopkins has spent the last few months talking about everyone but Dawson. He's commented on fighting heavyweight David Haye. He's



HISTORIC VICTORY
In order to obtain the rematch with Pascal, which ultimately led to Hopkins becoming the oldest boxer to ever win a world championship, B-Hop had to agree to make his first defense against Dawson. Stylistically, however, Dawson could be a nightmare for the 46-year-old champ.

PHOTO BY ROGERIO BARBOSA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

FIGHTING BACK
In his most recent fight, Dawson won a unanimous 12-round decision over Adrian Diaconu on the Hopkins-Pascal II undercard in Montreal. It was "Bad Chad's" first bout since losing to Pascal via technical decision in August 2010.

PHOTO BY ROGERIO BARBOSA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

commented on a rematch at cruiserweight with Antonio Tarver. In the aforementioned RING interview, Hopkins was asked what challenges Dawson presents, and he didn't even use Dawson's name in the answer.

"Emanuel Steward," Hopkins said. "If Emanuel Steward shows up, I've got to be on my game. If Emanuel Steward eats some bad oysters and doesn't show up, I'll be feeling a little better. But you've got to beat Emanuel Steward, and I think Naazim Richardson, Danny Davis, and my team are capable of coming up with a plan to offset not only one of the greatest trainers out there but also to make his student flunk the test."

Steward, the Hall of Fame trainer who took over Dawson's corner prior to his last fight, an efficient but forgettable decision win over Adrian Diaconu on the Hopkins-Pascal II undercard, read the interview and said Hopkins' overwhelming respect for him was the greatest compliment he's ever been paid. Steward also said he firmly believes his fighter presents a problematical style for the Philadelphia legend and that Hopkins would never have made the fight if he wasn't contractually bound to it.

"It's not a great fight for Bernard," Steward said. "There were rumors that he was dodging Chad and afraid of Chad for many years. I don't think he was afraid at all, but he realized that, style-wise, it was always going to be a difficult fight. It's a tough situation that Bernard's in; there are so many other more lucrative fights out there that are much more compatible style-wise, money-wise. Bernard is red-hot right now, so there's a lot more upside in it for Chad than for Bernard."

Although the hardcore boxing community respects Dawson, whose impressive 30-1 (17) resume includes two wins apiece over Tarver and Glen Johnson plus a one-sided victory over Tomasz Adamek, his name means nothing to casual fans, and he couldn't attract a paying crowd if he took part in a public three-way with Justin Beiber and Lady Gaga. So if Hopkins, 52-5-2 (32) and 1 no-contest, beats him, the reward to B-Hop is minimal.

And the risk that Hopkins won't beat him is substantial.

Who has Hopkins thrived against over the last 10 years? Aggressive, come-forward punchers with limited versatility. That describes Felix Trinidad, Kelly Pavlik, and to a lesser extent, Pascal. (Pascal is awkward and does have multiple dimensions, but he's still there to be hit and was strategically overmatched against Hopkins.) Who has Hopkins struggled with most over that time span? Boxers who can move a bit, guys with good hand speed who don't concern themselves much with landing knockout punches. That describes Joe Calzaghe, Winky Wright, Roy Jones, and to a lesser extent, Jermain Taylor.

There are always exceptions, of course. Hopkins dominated Tarver, a lefty who is by no means one-dimensional when he's in there with guys who aren't named Bernard Hopkins. But for the most part, the B-Hop matchmaking formula is fairly simple. And Dawson falls on the "avoid at all costs" side of it.

The New Haven, Connecticut, southpaw has fast hands, a persistent jab, solid fundamentals, and mobility. Even in his loss to Pascal, he was coming on strong and seemed to have an excellent chance at a come-from-behind knockout when the bout went to the scorecards on account of a head-clash-induced cut. Dawson is a world-class (perhaps even pound-for-pound-level) talent with an unaccommodating style.

When asked by Fighthype.com whether he thought his jab and speed would prove to

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WILL THE CEREB

Hopkins vs. Dawson is many things: legit championship fight, pick-'em matchup, intriguing intergenerational battle.

But one thing it is not is a crowd-pleasing slugfest.

And another thing it is not is free.

Because HBO didn't have any room in its 2011 budget for this fight (Ross Greenburg may be gone, but he's not forgotten), it's landing on HBO Pay-Per-View instead. That means the pressure is on Golden Boy Promotions, Gary Shaw Productions, HBO, and the two fighters to hype the hell out of this thing because, as fascinating as the matchup is and as important as it is to both the present and the future of the light heavyweight division, it's not one of those fights that sells itself. (And it should be noted that most of the pressure is on HBO, which is on the hook for $3-million in license fees no matter what.)

Yes, Hopkins is a star, one of the five most recognizable names in the sport. But he's never been a huge draw, and his only smash hit on PPV came with Oscar De La Hoya in the opposite corner. Let's note, however, that he's never had a flop either. He is what he is: a name everyone knows with a style not everyone likes, and that has consistently put him somewhere on the third tier of PPV attractions.

Dawson is one of the first names listed when people discuss recent HBO investments that haven't panned out. The talent is there. The fan base is not. People will not be purchasing this fight specifically to see Chad Dawson.

As is sometimes the case with fights in which Freddie Roach or Floyd Mayweather Sr. are involved, the trainers will actually play a major role in the marketing of this fight. B-Hop and Brother Naazim vs. Bad Chad and Master Manny is a slightly more interesting way of directing the conversation. None of that can make this feel like a Fight of the Year candidate. But from a thinking man's point of view, for a true fan of the Sweet Science, the boxer/trainer tag-team match should hold appeal.

In order for HBO to surpass its break-even point and for the network, the fighters, and the promoters to begin seeing upside, it's estimated that the fight needs to generate slightly over 100,000 buys (the exact figure depends on assorted variables, including the cost of the undercard). On the plus side, you have B-Hop's peaking popularity. On the minus side, this is one of four major pay-per-views in a span of 12 Saturdays, and not everyone can afford an extra $250 or so in cable charges heading into the holiday season. The guess here is that the fight will hit its marks, but it'll be close.

be the difference against Hopkins, Dawson responded, "Yeah, I think so. I think the jab, speed, and … the youth factor. Pascal didn't use his youth in the fight. He sat around looking for one big punch. You have to outwork Bernard, and Pascal didn't."

Indeed, that's how Taylor won two controversial decisions over Hopkins: by using his youthful energy to outwork the aging warrior. If you can't be *better* than Hopkins—and very few can—at least be *busier*.

Unfortunately for Dawson, however, he's going to need more than just a willingness to move his hands in order to win because, as much as Dawson is all wrong for Hopkins, as much as his style is the last one the light heavyweight champ wants to face, the reverse is also true. Hopkins is all wrong for Dawson too. Yes, the risk-reward dynamic is very different for Dawson on account of Hopkins' legendary name and the undisputed championship the old man holds. But in terms of pure Xs and Os, the stylistic undesirability of this match is a two-way street.

Stated simply, nobody in the past 20 years or so has mastered the art of making opponents look bad quite like Hopkins.

"Not only is Bernard a great fighter, but he's really a student of the game," Steward said. "We've got our work cut out for us. This is the biggest challenge I've had in a long time, maybe since I trained [Evander] Holyfield for his second fight with Riddick Bowe. But this is what I'm known for, laying out strategy. I've done this before, going back to Oliver McCall beating Lennox Lewis.

"This is going to be one of the toughest because Bernard not only has skills, but you're dealing with emotions right now. He's spiritually high, and that's sometimes tougher than the fighting skills. And he's one of the strongest-minded individuals I ever saw in my life. I think I have the strategy to beat

RAL SHOWDOWN SELL?

SECOND SHOT Hopkins decisioned Howard Eastman in his only fight in LA

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

Also worth watching: How will the fight draw at Staples Center in Los Angeles? Just as most feel the fight belonged on HBO and not HBO PPV, it also would have made more sense on the East Coast. When Hopkins fought at Staples in '05 against Howard Eastman, he drew an announced crowd of 13,064. But that was a happier economic time, and B-Hop was fresh off his win over De La Hoya. If Hopkins-Dawson can come anywhere close to that, it will make a powerful statement about what the Pascal fights have done for his popularity.

—E.R.

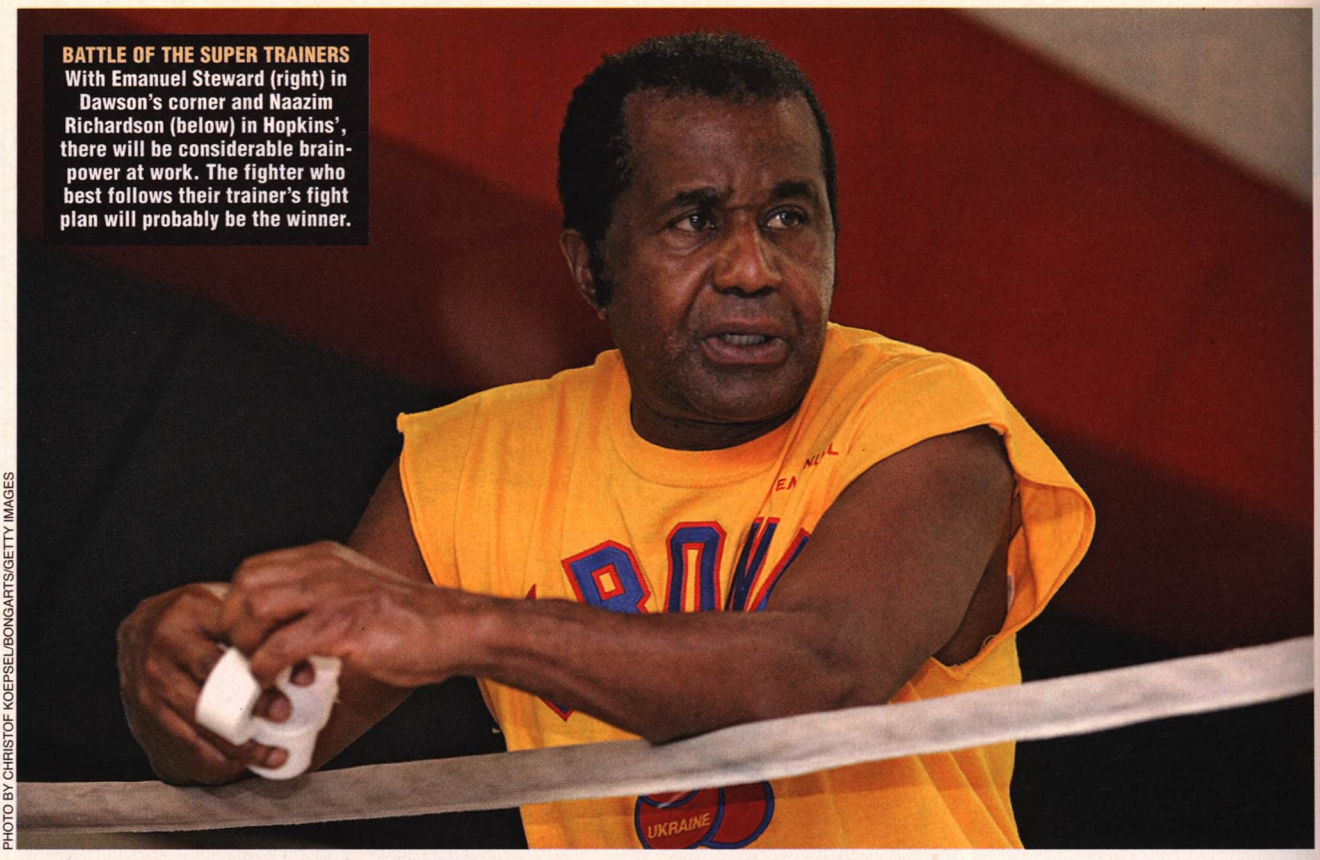
him, but it's got to be followed to a 'T.' At no point in time can Chad lose focus. He has a tendency to fight in spots and then lose focus. He can't afford to do that with Bernard because Bernard's going to be focused 100 percent, analyzing everything. Any little slippage in concentration, Bernard will take complete advantage of it. So it's really a stressful fight for me to train for."

Obviously, there's something of a mutual-admiration society that's been formed between Hopkins and Steward. The Kronk Gym guru was particularly bowled over by The Executioner's performance in the Pascal rematch, which Steward called for HBO right after he'd finished working Dawson's corner for the Diaconu fight. Steward took note of the technical stuff, like Hopkins probing with his jab to position Pascal's head where he wanted it then following with powerful right hands that landed with regularity. He also took note of the stuff you can't teach, like Hopkins getting rocked a couple of times by Pascal and hanging in there and firing right back. "He did so many things in that fight," Steward said. "I could hardly contain myself when I was doing the broadcast."

Steward had better be able to keep his pugilistic man-crush on Hopkins in check come October 15 because he'll need to devote all his energy to motivating his talented but inconsistent fighter. Steward compared his challenge to Holyfield-Bowe II; we think another Holyfield fight from the same era might apply here, "The Real Deal's" upset loss to Michael Moorer. In both Holyfield-Moorer and Hopkins-Dawson, the older champion is the mentally stronger fighter, while the younger southpaw challenger needs to be pushed to perform at a consistent level from round to round. Dawson is unlikely to win the mental battle against Hopkins, but the combination of Dawson and Steward might pull it off, just as Moorer did with the help of a hungry Teddy Atlas.

That's part of Steward's challenge. Another part is refining the technique of a young man who is now on his fifth head trainer in 32 pro fights. There was John Scully, then Dan Birmingham, then Floyd Mayweather Sr., then Eddie Mustafa Muhammad, and now Steward. All are respected cornermen. But it's fair to suspect Dawson has identity problems and has some kinks to work out in just his second training camp with Steward.

Steward's primary project has been getting Dawson to fight tall—something he did masterfully in rebuilding both Lewis and Wladimir Klitschko. Dawson grew up idolizing Pernell Whitaker and, as a result, has a natural instinct to duck down and fight from a low base like the 5'6" "Sweet Pea" did. Steward has been trying to phase that out of Dawson's game to make him use his height and lanky frame to his advantage.



BATTLE OF THE SUPER TRAINERS
With Emanuel Steward (right) in Dawson's corner and Naazim Richardson (below) in Hopkins', there will be considerable brain-power at work. The fighter who best follows their trainer's fight plan will probably be the winner.

PHOTO BY CHRISTOF KOEPSEL/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

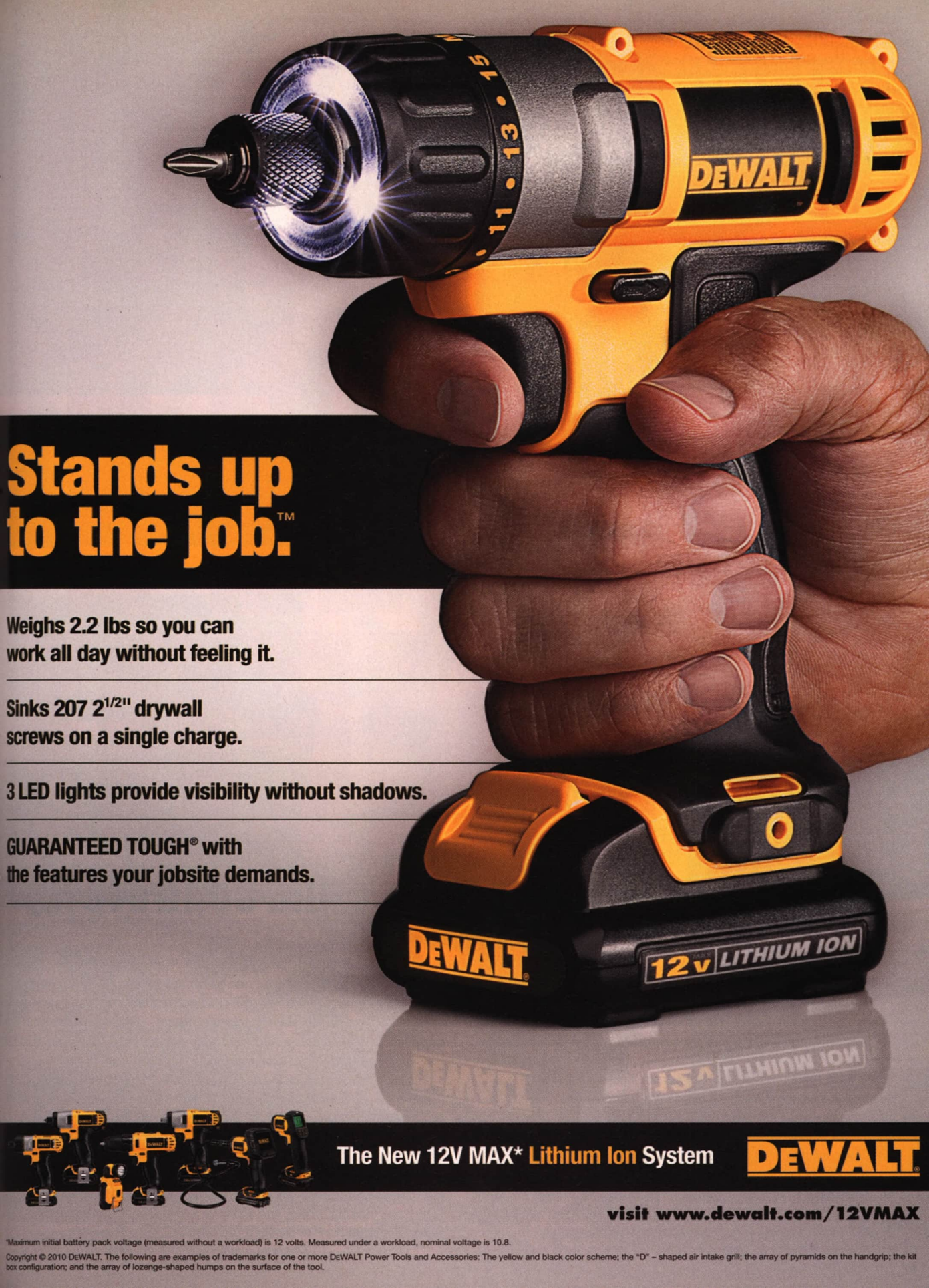
As he gets more comfortable with Steward and works to eliminate the bad habits, Dawson should show improvement from fight to fight. After their first outing together, the win over Diaconu, Dawson gave himself just a "C+" grade. Another "C+" will not get the job done against Hopkins.

Dawson's "A+" game, however, might be something even the great Hopkins can't deal with. No matter how uniquely brilliant a fighter you are, when you're 46 years old, you need a little cooperation from the other guy in the ring to thrive. Not to take anything away from Hopkins' performances against Pascal, but he did get just enough of that cooperation he was looking for.

Dawson won't make it easy for Hopkins. Hopkins won't make it easy for Dawson.

Both have fought out of their age group before with great success. They can't both experience great success this time, however.

From Philly to New Haven and all along the east coast that both fighters call home, the weather in mid-October is hard to predict. Some days it still feels like summer is hanging on. Other days it feels like winter has arrived early. If there's to be a changing of the guard at light heavyweight, there will be a changing of the seasons to go with it. In the October 15 battle between an Indian summer and the icy threat of winter, someone has to fall. ■



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A GOOD FIGHT RUINED!

A Sad Tale Of Incompetence And Controversy

By William Dettloff

There is almost no greater delusion than the one that posits an absolute good could exist in a sport in which the participant's goal is to produce brain injury in his opponent. But within the context of modern day prizefighting, the Abner Mares-Joseph Agbeko matchup, going in, was as close as one could reasonably expect to come. There simply was nothing to dislike about it, even by a media whose affection for concussion and redemption, not necessarily in that order, is surpassed only by its love of drama, reconditioned or manufactured, and rampant finger-pointing.

Mares-Agbeko was the final anyone who'd been enamored of Showtime's neat little bantamweight tournament was hoping for, secretly or otherwise, and the tournament itself was a more concise, less-bloated version of the super middleweight tournament so cursed from the start that one is forced to marvel at its happy conclusion. That Agbeko, 28-3 (22), chose to stay in the tournament after suffering sudden-onset sciatica, which postponed the final, reinforced the suspicion and the hope among believer-types that the fight was something along the lines of preordained.

Important too was the business reality that the winner would put himself in position to face Nonito Donaire, who by most credible accounts and despite his small physical stature, is being groomed to become the next Manny Pacquiao (non-Filipinos need not apply). There still would be the matter of Panama's Anselmo Moreno to deal with, but the unwashed masses would be happy to learn that some legal or promotional entanglement or another would prevent him from playing along, and Donaire versus the winner of Mares-Agbeko would be The Next Biggest Little Thing Ever.

VICTIM OF INEPTITUDE
Pain and incredulity are written on Agbeko's face as he shows referee Russell Mora where Mares hit him. Regrettably, Mora failed to take appropriate action, which could possibly have cost "King Kong" the verdict.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

LEGAL BLOW
Despite the horrible officiating, Mares fought very well and landed plenty of clean punches. He got off to a quick start and continued to score well throughout the 12-round bantamweight bout.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

Lastly, Mares, 22-0 (13), has the kind of charisma and story and smile that helps sell tickets and with the right promoter and attention—he has been a Golden Boy fighter since turning pro—it is believed in some quarters that he could be made into a kind of mini-Oscar De La Hoya, and what's wrong with that? You couldn't blame anyone for crossing his fingers with the hope that Mares could do it, though without The Golden One's troubling tendency to say or tweet things that get his minders and other associated suits into trouble. (And you wonder why Bob Arum kept him on such a short leash in the beginning. He knew.) But there would be time later for all that.

In the vernacular of modern sport, the fight couldn't miss. So long as the two of them made it to the ring and weren't besieged by a swarm of locusts or frogs falling from the sky or some other such Biblical disaster, everything would come together nice and tidy, and we all would go to bed afterward feeling good about our beleaguered sport. And then along came Russell Mora and, everything went to hell.

By the time it was over, judges C.J. Ross, Adalaide Byrd, and Oren Shellenberger had given Mares, Montebello, California, a majority decision win by scores of 113-113 and 115-111 (twice), but that is so incidental as to be irrelevant. (THE RING scored it for Mares, 115-112.) The real story was the ruination of what should have been a bright night for boxing and, as you surely know by now, how Mora screwed everybody—Agbeko, Mares, Showtime, the fans, and really, anyone who enjoys a good fistfight fought fair and square. Yes, in a rare display of clarity, the attendant sanctioning body ordered a rematch—isn't that nice of them—but the damage already has been done.

It wasn't just the low blows—55 of them according to boxing writer Thomas Hauser, who watched the fight a second time, which is not recommended for the overly empathetic—that Mora more or less ignored. It wasn't the blown knockdown call in the opening round, during which Agbeko's feet went out from under him as though he were on ice skates, even though a Mares punch had barely grazed him.

It wasn't just Mora's constant hectoring at Agbeko, Bronx, New York, via Ghana, to stop pulling Mares' head down, a way to say that Agbeko himself was causing Mares to hit him low. It wasn't even the final, terrible insult—the Mares left that slammed into Agbeko's groin *right in front of Mora*. Or when you thought finally Agbeko would get some justice, better late than never, Mora counted over him, giving Mares a second undeserved 10-8 round and all but guaranteeing Agbeko's defeat.

It wasn't any of the those single events that ruined everything, it was the sum total of all of them, and, when you heard later that Dana Jamison from Don King's office had warned Nevada Commissioner Keith Kizer that Mora is a "Golden Boy referee," it made it all worse even if it was an entirely baseless claim. And Kizer, who doesn't

"The fight couldn't miss. So long as the two of them made it to the ring and weren't besieged by a swarm of locusts or frogs falling from the sky or some other such Biblical disaster, everything would come together nice and tidy, and we all would go to bed afterward feeling good about our beleaguered sport. And then along came Russell Mora, and everything went to hell."

COUNTER HOOK
Almost lost in the low-blow controversy was the fact that Agbeko came back strong from a rocky start and drilled Mares with numerous solid punches, especially during the second half of the fight.

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/HOGANPHOTOS/GBP

HOW LOW CAN YOU GO?
The number of low blows Mares landed has been estimated at anywhere from 30 to 55. Unbelievably, he was not penalized even a single point for his numerous infractions.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

excuse himself to go to the restroom before running it by legal counsel first, made it worse as he makes many things worse, being overcautious, saying that Mora is a good referee who had a subpar night.

"In a situation like this, the referee needs to get with me and also with some of the senior referees here in Nevada, which I'm encouraging, to learn from this performance and improve in the future," Kizer told Kevin Iole at Yahoo.com. "He'll need to take his time coming back and build himself back up. I have a very high confidence he'll be able to do so."

One is compelled to wonder where Kizer was while Mora was having this subpar night and why, if he saw it unfolding as such, he never chose to pull Mora aside and straighten him out. He had 48 minutes in which to do it, after all. It was a long fight. He couldn't take him aside between rounds after, maybe, the 22nd low blow? Text him? Have his attorney draft him a letter? Why sit back and let him continue to screw up on a grand stage?

Also, you could be forgiven for asking what Mora needs to learn, exactly. What a low blow is and what it isn't? Isn't that lesson pretty much covered the first day of referee class and wrapped up before lunch? "Okay, class, here's the belt line. A punch landed above it is legal; below it is illegal. See here? Watch my hand. Legal, illegal. Above, below. Legal, illegal. One more time: Legal here, illegal there. Any questions? Good. Next lesson: how to tell when a round has come to an end. First, you'll hear a bell … "

One can only imagine what a "training session" between Mora and Joe Cortez, the most senior of Nevada's senior officials, might sound like: "The first thing you have to remember, Russell, is I'm fair but I'm firm. Next, here's the belt line. A punch above it is legal, below it illegal. Remember that, from class? Sure you do. Here legal, there illegal. Got it? Hey, did I tell you I was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame? No? Here's how it happened … "

Such was the severity of Mora's incompetence that he made sympathetic characters of two of the fight game's favorite villains—Showtime's grating Jim Gray, whose sarcastic postfight interrogation of Mora was received as brilliant payback, and Don King, who in better days had the juice to name the referee he wanted and got him, every time.

"What I saw was either total incompetence or corruption," King said. "Choose

"What I saw was either total incomp

MORE MORA-LIKE BLUNDERS

Russell Mora's showing during Mares-Agbeko takes its place among the more bizarre and/or controversial referee performances in the sport's modern history. Here are seven others, presented in chronological order.

Near the end of the 13th round of world lightweight champion Ad Wolgast's January 1912 defense against Joe Rivers, the fighters landed simultaneous punches: Rivers to Wolgast's jaw, Wolgast to Rivers' groin. Both fighters went down in a heap. Referee **Jack Welch** counted to four, helped Wolgast to his feet with one hand and counted over Rivers with the other. When the bell sounded and the fighters returned to their corners, Welch walked to Wolgast's corner and declared him the winner ... Jimmy Carter was an 11-3 favorite to retain the world lightweight title against Tommy Collins when the two met at Boston Garden in April 1953. After two quiet rounds, Carter exploded in the third, dropping Collins seven times. Collins went down three more times in the fourth while the referee, **Tommy Rawson**, stood casually by. Collins' corner finally rushed into the ring to stop it. Asked later why he didn't call it off, Rawson replied, "Carter never hit him flush."... In THE RING's 1990 Fight of the Year, Meldrick Taylor led Julio Cesar Chavez on two scorecards heading into the 12th round of their junior welterweight title fight. Chavez dropped Taylor with a right with 16 seconds left. Taylor rose at the count of six, but referee **Richard Steele** stopped it with two seconds remaining on the clock, Chavez wouldn't have landed another punch ... Emanuel Augustus was boxing rings around lightweight prospect Courtney Burton in Burton's hometown in their bout in July 2004, much to the displeasure of local referee **Dan Kelley**, who harassed Augustus incessantly and without cause. He finally penalized Augustus in the eighth round for "spinning." Burton won an appalling split decision ... Top lightweight Humberto Soto was having his way with tough but overmatched Francisco Lorenzo in their 2008 meeting in Las Vegas and floored him in the fourth. A glancing blow to the top of his head while he was down convinced Lorenzo to crumple, and referee **Joe Cortez** awarded him the victory by disqualification ... Top super middleweight Lucian Bute was miles ahead of Librado Andrade in their October 2008 meeting in Bute's backyard of Montreal when he ran out of gas in the 12th round and was floored with just two seconds remaining. Referee **Marlon Wright** stopped his count at seven to warn Andrade several times to return to a neutral corner. By the time he returned his attention to Bute, Bute had risen, and the fight was over ... Fleet-footed junior middleweight Yuri Foreman was already in over his head against power-punching Miguel Cotto in their match in June 2010 in Yankees Stadium when he injured his right knee. He was down twice and taking a beating when his chief second, Joe Grier, threw in the towel. Referee **Arthur Mercante Jr.** overruled Grier, cleared the ring and ordered the fight resumed before stopping it himself a round later.

—W.D.

CANADIAN CAPER
Ref Wright was all wrong

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

whichever you'd like. I've been around a long time, and I've never witnessed anything like that. It's so outrageous. The last one, Mares hit him directly in the [groin], and he was down, writhing in pain on his knees. And the referee called it a knockdown. It was so outrageous and makes you question everything you hold holy."

As a referee you know you've done something wrong when Showtime's terminally agreeable Al Bernstein tells the viewing audience your performance is the worst he's seen in 15 years. Bernstein's usually cheerful and unflappable call grew more exasperated as the fight wore on and his postfight wrap-up was almost halfhearted. You couldn't blame him. It should have been a banner night for Showtime, a celebration of a little tourney pulled off more or less flawlessly with the crowd's favorite, Mares, the winner. All they needed was a referee who would do the job right.

You could make the argument that Agbeko, though the official loser, gained

etence or corruption."—Don King

"I don't know why I have to fight two people in the ring all the time."
—Joseph Agbeko

MORA IN THE MIDDLE
When Mares dropped Agbeko with an egregiously low blow in the 11th round, instead of penalizing Mares and giving Agbeko a five-minute rest, as called for under the rules, Mora called it a legitimate knockdown!

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

something in a tainted defeat he would not have had with a clean, close decision loss or even a victory: the public's sympathy, which, temporarily at least, is a powerful ally. And to be clear, he did not perform overly well over the fight's first half, missing many punches and relying too heavily on sweeping left hooks that Mares, 117½, was only too happy to block and counter. Agbeko, 118, was a half step slower at least over the fight's first half, and, except for a big right that wobbled Mares in the fourth, he was continually outfought until the fight's latter stages, when he stepped forward and threw straight right hands in earnest.

"This was a very big fight tonight, and I am a champion. And I don't know why I have to fight two people in the ring all the time," Agbeko said after the fight. "The referee came into our dressing room [before the fight] and gave us instructions and warned us not to do low blows. But the referee wasn't doing anything about it when he was hitting me very hard with very low punches."

It was a testament to Mares' easy charisma that both the crowd and the broadcast team did not castigate him. Even with his history of hitting low (see his fight against Vic Darchinyan), Mares comes off as rather a mischievous adolescent caught peering into the neighbor girl's bedroom window. You want to tousle his hair, buy him and his underage friends a case of beer, and tell him not to do it again. Imagine the outrage if someone like, say, Andrew Golota had hit an opponent low 50 times and not been penalized. He would have needed a police escort to get out of the building (again).

Despite the low blows, Mares fought well throughout, using his quickness and straighter punches to beat Agbeko to the punch and his feet to jump in, stab Agbeko with a hook or right, and then jump back out again where he could watch Agbeko's counter hook sail by. He was everything you wanted a bright young star to be if you were in the star-making business and if you didn't mind that your star likes to hit guys in the balls over and over.

Mora made all of it moot, made sure that in the main, it is he who will be remembered when fans look back at Mares-Agbeko I. It made for an awkward time for the sport's contrarians. Even the most disagreeable among them could muster no defense for Mora and were forced into the fold, an uncomfortable place to be sure. It couldn't be helped. Some things are just too obvious. ■

POR LOS QUE SE ATREVEN A SUBIR AL RING

CON CARÁCTER

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PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

"Fans Love The Way I Fight"

He doesn't take himself too seriously and doesn't expect others to either, but you'd better take Brandon Rios seriously in the ring. The 25-year-old puncher is THE RING's number-one lightweight contender and may soon be in position to fight for the 135-pound title if reigning lightweight champion Juan Manuel Marquez does not return to the division following his November catchweight match with Manny Pacquiao.

Rios, 28-0-1 (21), has reached this lofty status by brandishing a fan-friendly, balls-to-the-wall style and beating an increasingly significant string of opponents.

To those who don't know him, Rios can come across as crass, vulgar, and confrontational, but he doesn't care what anyone thinks about him. To those that do know him, he can be passionately loyal, unflinchingly candid, witty, and frequently hysterical. It's Rios that keeps trainer Robert Garcia's Oxnard, California, gym constantly in stitches with his flamboyant banter.

What every fight fan does know about Rios, however, is that they're going to see an action-packed fight each time he's in the ring.

Lately, that's come with considerable risk to anyone who's willing to step in front of him. Excluding Rios' seventh-round disqualification victory over Anthony Peterson in September 2010, "Bam Bam" has stopped his last nine opponents, and Peterson was heading that way until he decided to go on his own terms.

Rios comes from an extensive amateur background and, like many fighters, a topsy-turvy personal life wrestling demons that he feels are now behind him. His sole focus is to make 2011 a memorable year in his career curve.

It's started well with a TKO of Miguel Acosta for a version of the WBA lightweight title in February, and then he tallied a thrilling third-round kayo of Urbano Antillon in July in one of the most exciting fights of the year.

RING Managing Editor Joseph Santoliquito spoke with Rios in early August, about a month after Rios annihilated Antillon. He spoke about his ongoing blood feud with Victor Ortiz, his upbringing, the lessons he's learned in life, the controversial joke he made about Freddie Roach's Parkinson's disease, his Garden City, Kansas, roots, and his unbending devotion to his trainer Garcia and manager Cameron Dunkin. Santoliquito reports:

"The talk you hear in boxing circles when Brandon's name is broached is not always flattering. What I found, however, was a guy with a blue sense of humor who could probably be a hit on a nightclub circuit and someone that many people in boxing haven't taken the time to understand. Then again, after listening to Brandon, the beauty of his personality is that he doesn't care. What really matters are his tight-knit circle of friends and family. Moreover, it's almost as much fun listening to him talk as it is watching him destroy opponents inside the ring."

The Ring: What did you learn about yourself in the Urbano Antillon fight?

Brandon Rios: After the Antillon fight, I learned that I'm just getting better and better as the fight goes on. I listened to the instructions of Robert [Garcia] very well. I perfected whatever my corner told me to do in the fight. I learned that I'm a very good listener. When I first worked with Robert, I wasn't a good listener in the corner. You can say that about the early part of my career, I wasn't listening, and I got dropped *(laughs)*. I don't want that to happen to me again. My corner can see things I can't see—extra eyes that help me out. That's what I would say I took from the Antillon fight. In a huge fight like that, I listened.

The Ring: Was that the way you intended to fight Antillon?

BR: There was nothing different about the way I fought Antillon. The game plan was to knock Antillon out. I thought I could hit him with the overhand right. When he throws his right, he leaves himself wide open, and I caught him twice with the overhand right and that ended the fight. I knew I was going to knock him out *(laughs)*. I just didn't think it would be that early. I thought this would go 11 or 12 rounds. I got him out earlier than I thought.

The Ring: Let's talk about the Freddie Roach incident for a second where you were caught on camera making fun of him during the buildup of the Pacquiao-Antonio Margarito fight.

BR: The Freddie Roach thing was just a bad video. We got caught on camera doing it. Let's get something straight: I don't make fun of people with an illness. At the time, I regretted it, and now it's done and over with. I got called every name in the book by the media, by a bunch of people who don't know me. I got caught in a bad moment.

It was in camp, we got heated up, and this bad video came out. I think it got blown up way out of proportion. I told Freddie Roach to his face that I apologized for what I did at the press conference. We tried to get close to him and apologize to him privately, but he had his people around him and they weren't going to let us say anything to him. If I had said that about someone else, the media wouldn't have blown it out of proportion. Freddie has a big name in boxing. A lot of people like Freddie. I respect Freddie. I don't make fun of people that have an illness. Let me catch someone making fun of someone handicapped. Let them try something with me on the street.

My problem is that I like to play jokes a lot. Sometimes my timing isn't the best. Everyone who comes to our gym, they're going to get something from me. I like to f___ with people. If I ever found someone making fun of someone handicapped, anyone, I would say something. I want people to get over the Freddie Roach thing. If they don't, that's too bad. I'm still moving forward.

The Ring: Do you think the Roach incident caused people to misunderstand you?

BR: That's a good question. Yes, I do. I'm an outgoing person who says what is on my mind. I didn't mean any harm with the Freddie Roach thing. I don't mean any harm to anyone. I don't like to get mad and fight all of the time. I keep my fighting in the ring. I don't like drama, not in my personal life *(laughs)*. I think I'm misunderstood about who I am a lot of the time. People aren't used to hearing the truth, but that's me. Whatever is on my mind will come right out. I hold nothing back.

The Ring: How did you get the nickname "Bam Bam"?

BR: I used to be called "Chico" when I was younger and throughout the amateurs. All my St. Louis guys, Devon Alexander and Kevin Cunningham, they used to call me Chico. I didn't take offense to it. It was cool. But as I got into the pros, Robert and Dr. [Roger] Anderson, my cut doctor, said I had to come up with something different as a pro, something that started with a "B." I came up with the nickname, Bam Bam. They'd see me hit someone with two punches, bam, bam, and they're done. I told them I like "Bam Bam" Rios. It had a ring to it *(laughs)*. Since then, I've been Bam Bam Rios.

The Ring: Talk about your parents and being raised Mexican-American in the United States?

BR: My father worked at a slaughterhouse, and my mother was a homemaker. But I never had my dad around and my mother was never really strict on us, and it's why I was always in trouble, I think. In the gym, I was fine, an angel *(laughs)*. Outside the gym, I was always in trouble, the devil *(laughs)*.

I love my dad to death and he made me what I am today, but there was never discipline in the house. I lived the way I lived. I didn't live with my parents when I was 15; I got out. I felt like I was unstoppable, that no one could change me.

The Ring: Were there times when your parents tried to step in?

BR: It's funny because, right now, my mom tries to discipline me *(laughs)*. It doesn't work. My father stepped in when I was 18, and I told him that it wasn't going to work right now. When I was younger, I didn't know what discipline was. Why would it work now? It's why I was living the way I was. I wouldn't know how it felt to get grounded and have allowance taken away or privileges taken away, like watching TV. It's why I was the way I was back then.

The Ring: How bad did things get for you?

BR: There were times they wanted to lock me up for five years. I broke some kid's jaw. I was already 18 when that incident happened. It was horrible. I was hanging with the wrong crowds, doing stupid things, and always in and out of trouble. I was 18 and I was ready to sign with Cameron Dunkin, and he didn't know what to do with me. By this time, I was with Robert Garcia, and he didn't know what to do with me *(laughs)*. Robert would tell me I'm f____ing up. Robert was telling me I was being a stupid ass.

I was born in Lubbock, but, at age two, we moved to Garden City, Kansas. Every time I was back there, back then, I used to get in trouble. I would either be in jail or on probation. You name it *(laughs)*.

The Ring: What changed that?

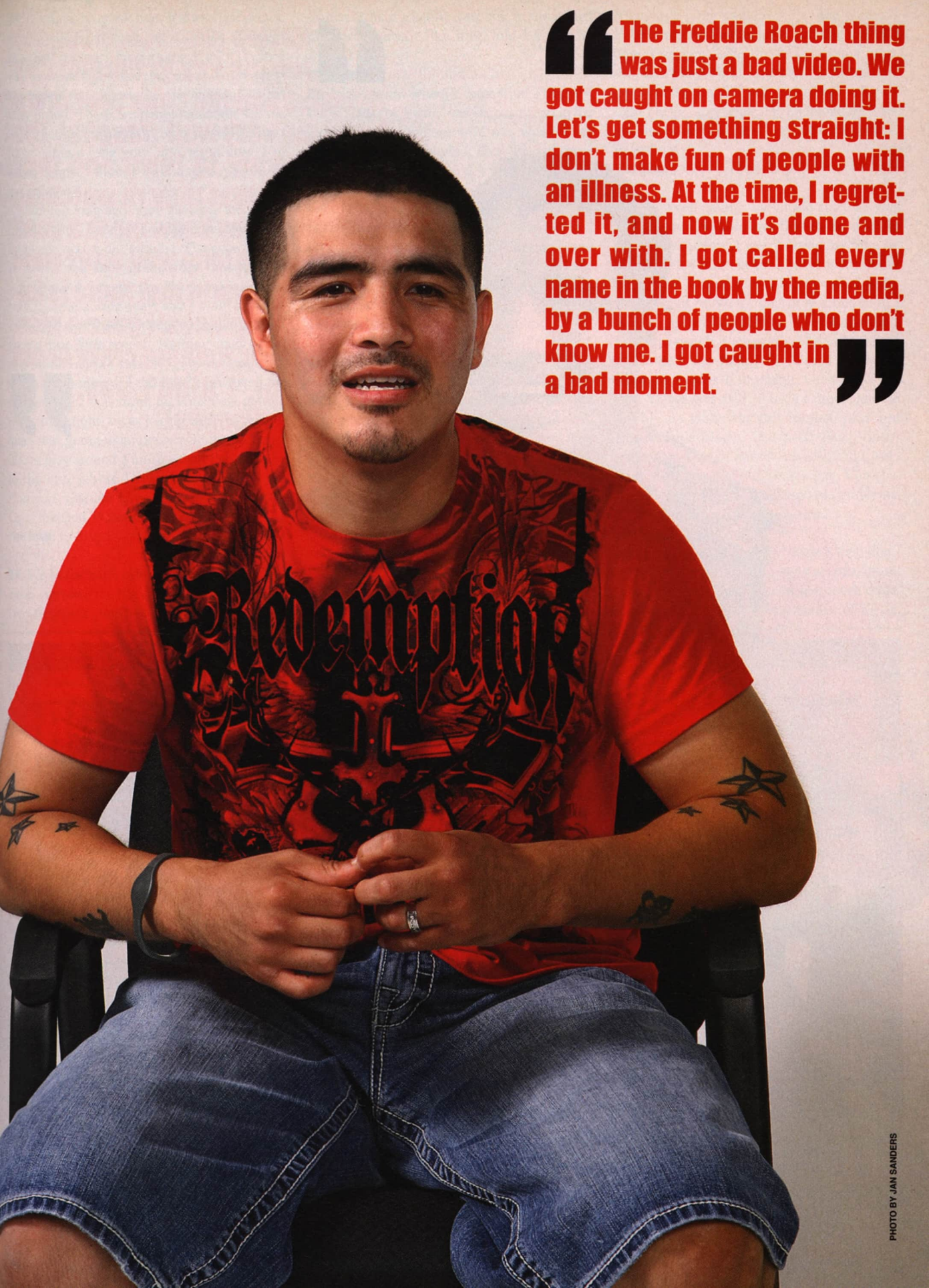
BR: What changed that was that Robert was always in my head, and my wife, Vicky, she helped me out a lot. Donald Leary, a friend of mine, would keep telling me that I had so much talent that I could be a champion and I was wasting it. I was around champions. I had Steven Luevano, Brian Viloria, Antonio Margarito, Mikey Garcia, all this talent I'd see every day and see what they're doing. I had amateur experience, and I didn't want to be a nobody. I didn't want to be known as a screw-up and make people happy by being a screw-up.

The Ring: Was there any one moment that you saw the error of your ways?

BR: I got in trouble in Garden City for something that I don't even remember what it was. My previous relationship with my baby's mother really spun out of control *(laughs)*. I think that's how it started. She said I hit her, and it escalated from there. I ran away, plus I had some pot on me. When I was hiding, I saw my brother-in-law, who is a truck driver. He pulled up at a stop, and I wanted to go with him. I was set. I was going leave with him and go out of the state. I was out there in the truck and I thought about everything. My mother knew where I was and told me the cops were looking for me. She told me to turn myself in, and I turned myself in. That's when I turned my life around.

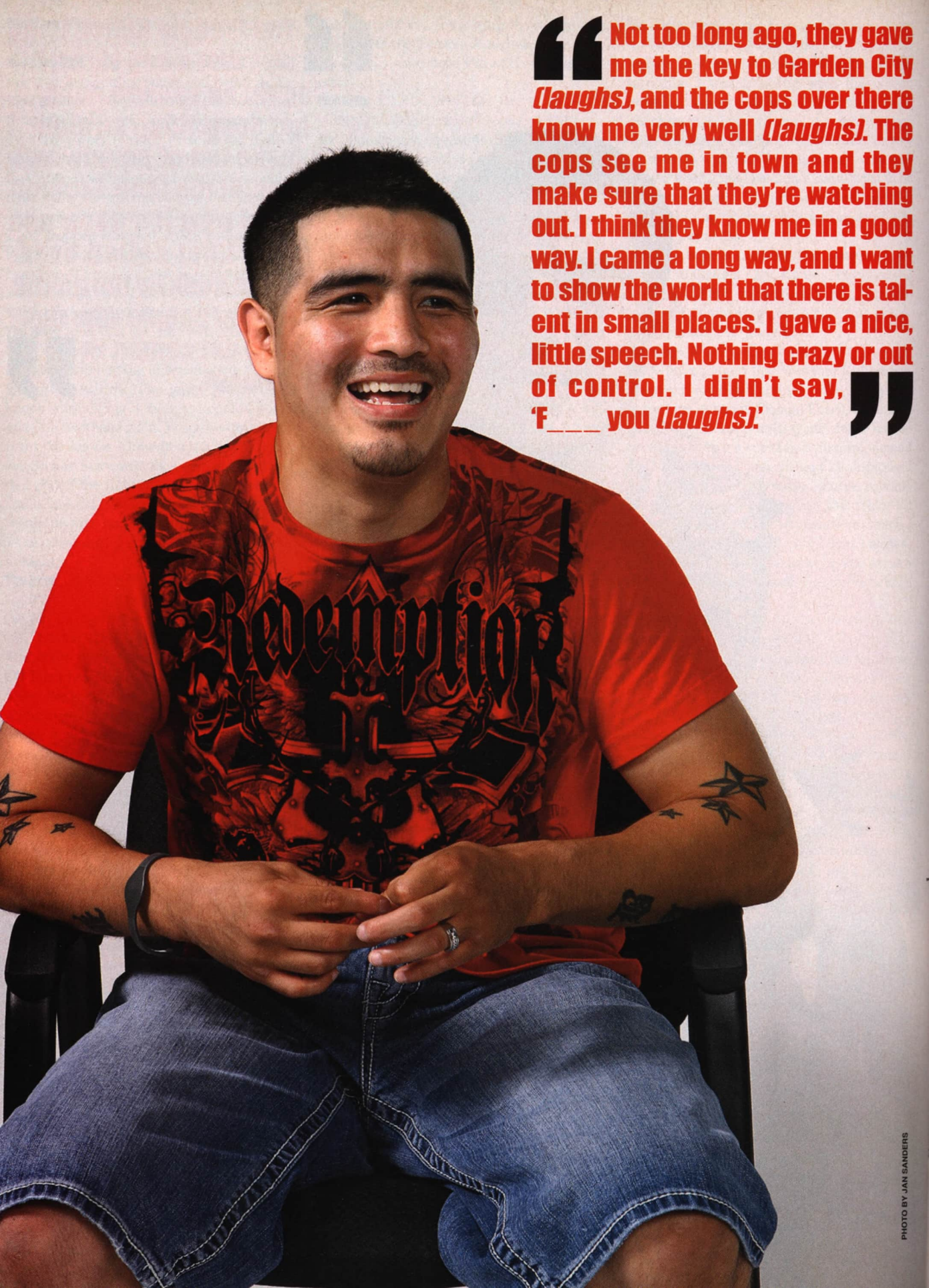
I did a little time after that, for about five months. I did time before, nothing major like prison time. I was always in and out of jail. They called me a jailbird. I'd leave and I'd come back *(laughs)*. I'm keeping it real. The five months changed me. It helped me. Some people it doesn't. My older brother is always in jail too. All of my time wasn't due to drugs. It was all because of fighting. I never put my hands on a woman. The reason why I ran is because I had drugs on me, not because I hit her.

The Ring: Does it seem like a lifetime ago that all of this happened?



> **"The Freddie Roach thing was just a bad video. We got caught on camera doing it. Let's get something straight: I don't make fun of people with an illness. At the time, I regretted it, and now it's done and over with. I got called every name in the book by the media, by a bunch of people who don't know me. I got caught in a bad moment."**

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS



"Not too long ago, they gave me the key to Garden City *(laughs)*, and the cops over there know me very well *(laughs)*. The cops see me in town and they make sure that they're watching out. I think they know me in a good way. I came a long way, and I want to show the world that there is talent in small places. I gave a nice, little speech. Nothing crazy or out of control. I didn't say, 'F___ you *(laughs)*.'"

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

BR: It's funny you ask that. It does. The person you're talking to today is so much different than that person. I have changed a lot. Yeah, I like to curse, fight, and play jokes, but the person people see today is the one making Garden City proud. There are people that still see me as someone that would be a nobody. But I have come a long way, and, right now, I'm super happy. I think I've changed myself for the good.

Not too long ago, they gave me the key to Garden City *(laughs)*, and the cops over there know me very well *(laughs)*. The cops see me in town, and they make sure that they're watching out. I think they know me in a good way. I came a long way, and I want to show the world that there is talent in small places. I gave a nice, little speech. Nothing crazy or out of control. I didn't say, "F___ you *(laughs)*." Can you imagine if I did that? I practiced the speech, and I was more nervous than getting ready for a fight. I was joking with my friends that I was going to go crazy with the speech. I like to play around a lot like that. I got the key to the city where I was in and out of jail *(laughs)*. Garden City was all about Victor Ortiz that and Victor Ortiz this. It's not.

The Ring: Is there competition between you and Victor?

BR: We know each other, but there are differences between us, big differences. We used to live together, and we stayed with Robert Garcia. Robert's family took him in and turned him pro. I don't like him, and I know he doesn't like me.

The Ring: Where did this dislike originate?

BR: I don't know where it came from. Honestly, I don't. Maybe Victor was jealous of me in the gym. Victor, someone told me, was telling people I was gay *(laughs)*. Then this girl came up to me and asked me if I was gay and if I hang out with nothing but gay guys. I couldn't believe he was talking s___ about me. Not only that, I went to see Victor's pro debut. I was getting ready to sign with Cameron, and Robert told me that Victor was running around saying Cameron shouldn't sign me because I was a crackhead *(laughs)*.

The Ring: How did you feel about these allegations?

BR: I brushed it off my shoulders. Victor had his differences with Robert; he went to Robert's brother, Danny. I just didn't like Victor accusing me of things. This is real stuff. I don't f___ around. When that incident happened, I was getting threats over the phone that I better get Victor's name out of my mouth. I left it alone.

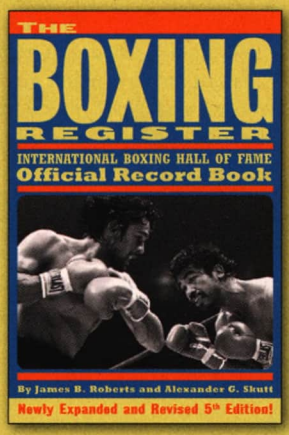
Victor isn't who everyone thinks he is. His whole story is a lie. His father tried to see Victor when Garden City presented the key to the city, but Victor called the cops on his own father. His own little brother warned Robert that once Victor gets big, he's going to change. Victor is a lying motherf___er and pretends to be someone that he isn't, and that's what I hate. Everyone who thinks they know him, they don't know him very well. He had people come after me and my girlfriend, which I didn't really appreciate. He badmouthed Robert, and Robert Garcia is one of the best people in boxing.

The Ring: I have a feeling you'd like to fight Victor?

BR: I've been calling Victor out since he was at 140, and he told me that there was no money in it. Now, I won't waste my time on him. I called him out for a year, and nothing happened. I hope Floyd Mayweather beats the hell out of Victor and dominates him. I won't pay for that. I'll go over someone's house to watch it *(laughs)*. The sad thing is one time I was happy for him. I never did anything to him. If anything, I helped his ass out. Victor was still in high school, and he got his ass kicked by this football player at this burger place. The next day, Victor grabbed me out of Robert's house, and I went back with him looking for this guy. I had his back. He was dragging me into his problems. Then he split up a family over it.

The Ring: What do you mean?

BR: Robert and his brother, Danny, they don't even speak to each other anymore. And it's all over Victor. They live so close to each other. Danny and Robert split because of Ortiz.



The Boxing Register—
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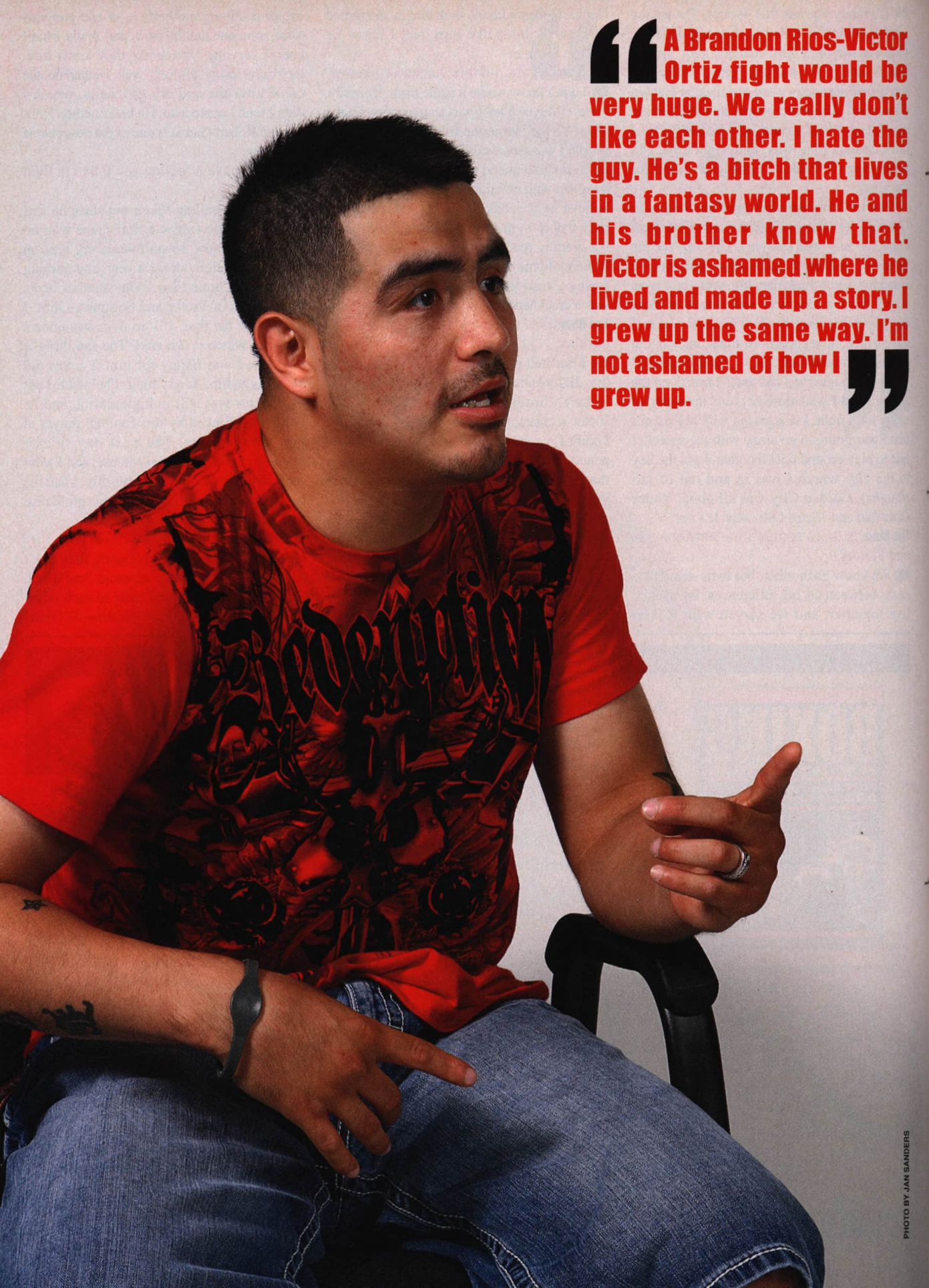

> "A Brandon Rios-Victor Ortiz fight would be very huge. We really don't like each other. I hate the guy. He's a bitch that lives in a fantasy world. He and his brother know that. Victor is ashamed where he lived and made up a story. I grew up the same way. I'm not ashamed of how I grew up."

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Robert actually hired Danny to help out with other fighters, and it was just to help out. Robert needed help because he has a lot of fighters. Victor left Robert and he called Danny, and now he's working with Danny.

The Ring: A Rios-Ortiz fight might be huge?

BR: A Brandon Rios-Victor Ortiz fight would be very huge. We really don't like each other. I hate the guy. He's a bitch that lives in a fantasy world. He and his brother know that. Victor is ashamed where he lived and made up a story. I grew up the same way. I'm not ashamed of how I grew up. I lived in a house where all the windows were all busted up and covered with plastic. Victor was ashamed of all of that.

The Ring: What was it like being raised in Garden City, Kansas?

BR: Being raised in Garden City, Kansas, there is no place like home *(laughs)*. Really though, living-wise, it was horrible sometimes *(laughs)*. We lived rough. We were poor, but my dad always made sure we had something. Sometimes I used to borrow some friend's clothes. We never had a Christmas growing up where we got a lot of presents. I can think of one Christmas when I was little, and I can't even remember what age I was when I might have got a few things. I never had a *real* Christmas, and, when I hear people say that, I can relate. I know how they feel. It's made me way stronger because of that situation. I worked my ass off to get where I am today.

The Ring: Where did you train when you were a kid?

BR: My ring was a garage. We had one bag, and my father was my trainer. The ring was four buckets. We'd fight inside the four buckets. It was pretty crazy *(laughs)*, but it was fun. The best comes out of the ghetto. Your desire to become something comes from that. For me personally, it's still hard for me to train in a good gym. In a nice gym, I'm not comfortable. I feel like I'm not sweating and working hard. I'm still looking for the buckets *(laughs)*. I keep it real and don't change for nothing.

The Ring: Did you think you would ever get out of Garden City?

BR: Honestly, no. I never thought that I would get out of there. I thought I'd train and fight, and that was it. I'd get messed up in the streets. I'll admit it; everything I did I did wrong. I made the choice, I made the mistakes, and I learned from them. At the time, Garden City was my place, and I loved getting in trouble. I liked the reputation that I had.

The Ring: What was the transition like, moving from your father as a trainer to Robert Garcia?

BR: At first, it was a little nerve-wracking. My father trained me all of the way back since I was eight years old. When you train with one trainer, you get used to one style, and, when I first started working with Robert, I had to get used to seeing his face in the corner. My father helped me out a lot and I looked up to him for everything.

Trust me, when my father has the time, he comes to my fights, and I'll put him in the corner with me. The strange thing is, it was my father who was the one that actually told me that Robert Garcia knows more than him and he would do a better job. He helped me get this far, and he told me it would be best to work with Robert. My father understood Robert Garcia could get me farther than he could. I respect him for doing that. How many fathers would do that?

The Ring: At what age did you begin thinking you had a pro career in your future?

BR: I was 10 years old *(laughs)*. No kidding. Me and my dad were watching a fight together—I forget what fight—but I told my father that I was going to be a world champion one day. Since then, my father was the only one who believed in me since day one. I wanted him to be there when I won the title, so we could enjoy the victory together.

The Ring: Do you think you would be as good without your prolonged amateur career?

BR: My amateur career helped me a lot. I had a lot of amateur fights. Without that background, it would have taken more time to get to where I am today. I've seen every situation in the ring. Without that much amateur experience, I wouldn't be a world champion right now.

The Ring: Many pros today that tried out for the Olympic Team did not cherish the experience. Did you like the Olympic trials experience?

BR: To tell you the truth, I was in the losing bracket in the Olympic trials. I didn't think I'd make it as far as I did. I went to the box-off, but they had already decided who would represent the US. I mean it. I lost to Mickey Bey in the semifinals. That was bull____ and they made me the alternate in 2004. Bey got hurt, and they never called me to replace him. It's all politics. No one told me anything. They have their teams picked out regardless of what you do. That's f____ed up. I'm the only person from Garden City, Kansas, that made it that far. In 2004, that was my year to shine, and I was shining. I think I would have gotten a medal from the 2004 Olympics.

The Ring: Now look where you are.

BR: Right, the funny thing is all these Olympic guys I fought in the trials are fighting six- and eight-round fights. That's right, look where I am and look where they are *(laughs)*. After the Olympic trials, I got a pro deal, and I got to meet a great person and trainer like Robert Garcia and a great manager in Cameron Dunkin. I wouldn't trade anything for that.

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The Ring: What went into the decision to sign with Bob Arum?

BR: After the trials, Shelly Finkel wanted to give me a deal. He was talking to me about being my manager and how he could get me fights. He told me when I was ready to turn pro that he would sign me. When I was ready to make the move, Shelly sent me a contract that was three pages. Three f___ing pages *(laughs)*!

I called Robert and told him that Shelly Finkel sent me a contract. Robert told me not to sign and he had a better deal with Cameron Dunkin. I didn't know Shelly Finkel or Cameron. I would have signed it, but I didn't know any better. Robert got me in touch with Cameron Dunkin, and I signed on at Victor Ortiz' pro debut. Cameron explained everything to me page-by-page, and this contract looked like a big book compared to what Shelly Finkel sent me. I love Cameron and Robert, and Top Rank has been treating me good. That's why I came to Top Rank.

The Ring: How has life changed for you since becoming a father?

BR: I have three children. I have an eight-year-old daughter, her name is Laila, a six-year-old, Marcus, after Marco Antonio Barrera, and my last one is Mia, who's six months old and named after Mia St. John *(laughs)*. Notice a pattern *(laughs)*. All my kids are named after fighters. I love boxing so much I named all of my kids for fighters. Laila and Marcus live with their mother in Garden City, Kansas, and we don't have a good relationship. I would like to see my kids more often, but Mia is my queen. I love all my kids the same, but I see Mia every day. She's my world right now. I don't ever want to think of her as grown up, to think about the time she's dating. We'll let that be for now *(laughs)*.

The Ring: What do you think will happen in the third Pacquiao-Marquez match?

BR: I think Marquez was a hell of a warrior and fighter, and notice I said *was*. He's over the hill: Pacquiao is going to destroy him. They have gone in two different directions. Marquez doesn't do well above 135 pounds. Pacquiao is fighting the bigger guys, and he's stopping all of them.

The Ring: What kind of challenges would Juan Manuel Marquez impose if you were to fight him?

BR: The challenge for me with him would be staying on my game because he'll try to box me. But the tremendous pressure I put on him will turn it into a great slugfest. I see myself stopping him *(laughs)*. Yes, I can see myself stopping Juan Manuel Marquez. There, you heard me say it *(laughs)*. I can see a lot of people calling me stupid and crazy for saying that, which wouldn't be the first time *(laughs)*, but I can see myself doing that. I've met Marquez in person, and he's a small, little fella, and I'm a big lightweight.

The Ring: There have been some very controversial decisions of late: Erislandy Lara-Paul Williams, Matthew Macklin-Felix Sturm, and Lucas Matthysse-Devon Alexander. Are you concerned about being the victim of a bad decision?

BR: I do, if I fight someone in his hometown. That's the key. If I don't fight anyone in his hometown, I don't have to worry about it. I thought Lara won because, every punch he threw, he got Williams. I thought Matthysee dominated Alexander. I like Devon and respect him, but even some people in his home crowd thought he lost too. Bad decisions hurt the sport.

The Ring: The heavyweight division is so boring right now. Does the trickle-down effect hurt guys like you who are action fighters?

BR: It's very embarrassing. David Haye was saying the Klitschkos make the heavyweights boring, but it was Haye that made that fight very boring *(laughs)*. It makes boxing look bad. The press conferences were so good, and the little things they did before the ring entrances, they were great, and then they got in the ring and looked like s___. Haye was running around like he was a giraffe running from a hungry lion, afraid to get eaten.

I want to bring boxing back. Fans love the way I fight. I don't back down from anything. But it does hurt boxing to see the Haye-Klitschko fight and how boring it was. I want to change that. It's something I'd love to do. Robert and me would go down in history.

The Ring: Give us your hit list—who are some of the guys you'd like to fight?

BR: My hit list is a short one. I want to get a piece of Victor Ortiz in the ring first before anyone. After I annihilate him, I want Humberto Soto and Devon Alexander. I would love to do Manny Pacquiao in 2013 and then the big guy, Floyd Mayweather.

The Ring: Who are the fighters that you enjoyed watching?

BR: I grew up watching Julio Cesar Chavez, Diego Corrales, Jose Luis Castillo, Arturo Gatti, and Micky Ward—mainly those five guys. They have the same style that I have. I'm always aggressive and pressing the action. The way they moved and blocked punches, the way they left everything in the ring, it's the way I like to fight. It's something I love to do. It's why I try to resemble their moves in the ring.

The Ring: Do you think you're within striking distance of the pound-for-pound ratings?

BR: Being truthful, no, because I haven't done enough yet to get there. I haven't beaten anyone there yet. But very shortly, I'll be pound-for-pound.

The Ring: What do you think you need to do to get in there?

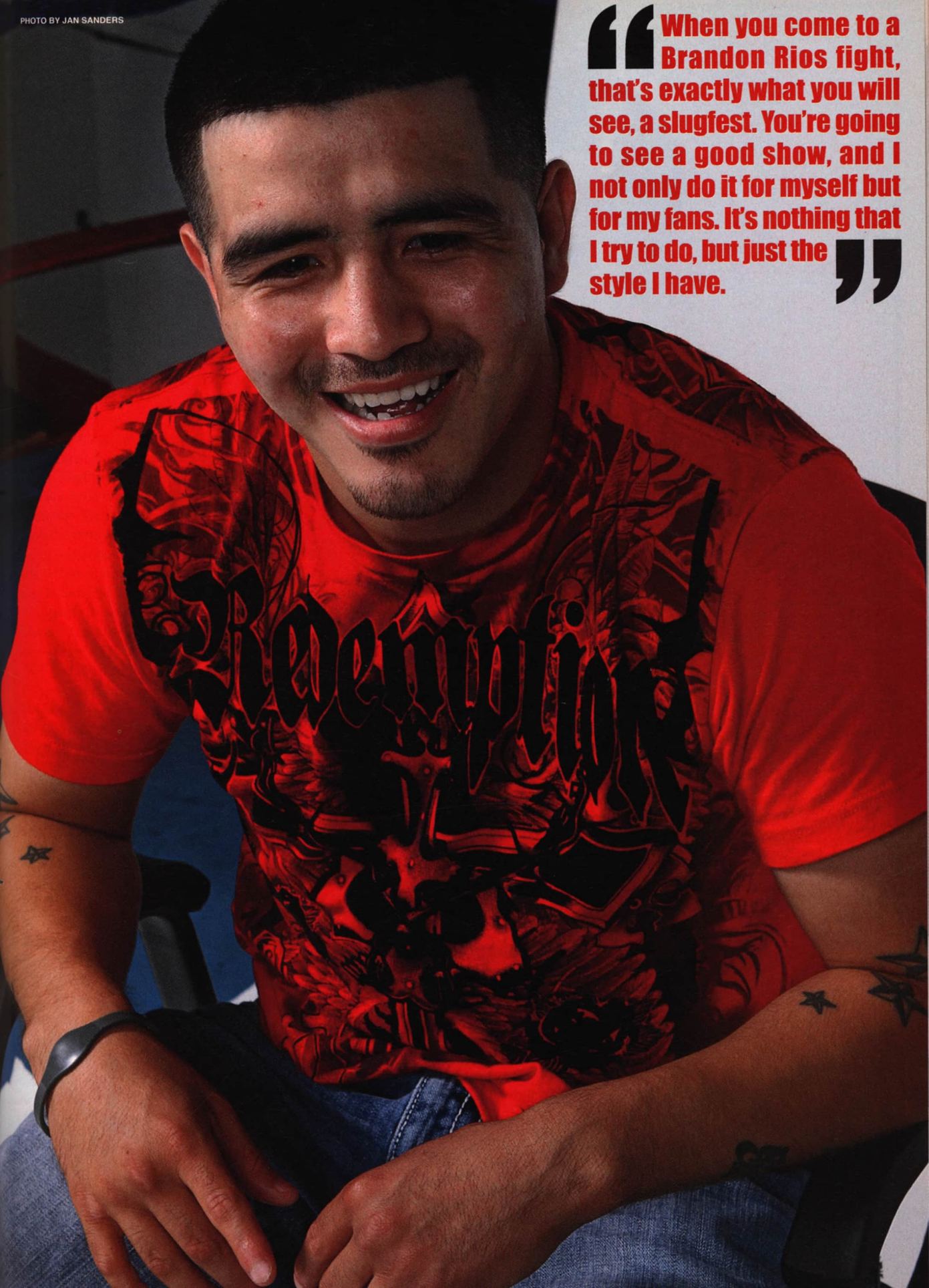
PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS
"When you come to a Brandon Rios fight, that's exactly what you will see, a slugfest. You're going to see a good show, and I not only do it for myself but for my fans. It's nothing that I try to do, but just the style I have."

“I want to be remembered as the guy who always gave everything he had and was one hell of a fighter. I don’t care whether I make pound-for-pound, but I want to be remembered as a great fighter who put on exciting fights and brought boxing back.”

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

BR: Fight a guy from pound-for-pound list and destroy him. That's the way to go at it *(laughs)*.

The Ring: What opponents hit you the hardest?

BR: All of my opponents hit me the hardest *(laughs)*. I really don't get dazed too easily. But Miguel Acosta, he really hit me the hardest and really hurt me. It was a punch I didn't see. Those are the ones that hurt you the most.

The Ring: Would you ever think of being a part of a tournament such as Showtime's "Super Six?"

BR: If it's good for the sport and me, why not? I would love to be involved with something like that, but I have to leave that up to Cameron and put in Robert's hands. If they think it's a good idea, why not?

The Ring: What's your fascination with tattoos? Why do you think so many fighters have tattoos today?

BR: My son's name is on my chest. My mom is half Indian, so I have a little something like that in me. That's why I have an eagle on my chest. I'm not done with it thought. The eagle represents the Mexican and Indian sides of me. I have the stars on my arm because that's the last thing someone is going to see after they fight me. I have Bam Bam tattooed on my forearm and Indian feathers on my right leg.

Listen *(lowers his voice)*, I'm going to give you an exclusive. I have Wow tattooed to my ass—a big "W" on one butt check and a big "W" on the other, and it makes a "Wow" when I'm mooning people.

The Ring: Are you serious?

BR: Nah, just messin' with you *(laughs)*.

The Ring: With older guys like Bernard Hopkins and Glen Johnson still fighting, how much longer do you see yourself fighting?

BR: That's something me and Robert talk about all of the time. I'm 25, and I can see myself doing it for five more years. I want to assist Robert and clear all of the guys in the gym when it's time to shut down *(laughs)*. Everyone get the f___ out *(laughs)*! I still plan on being involved in the sport when I'm done. When Robert retires, I want to take over the gym, like Robert took over for his dad. I want to keep it in the family. I know I'm not Robert's brother, but I consider myself family because they brought me in. I like to say Robert is a brother from another mother *(laughs)*.

The Ring: You're in a hot gym right now, with yourself, Mikey Garcia, and Antonio Margarito. How does that help you?

BR: I spar with Mikey, and he's one of the most intelligent fighters in the gym and he takes that into the ring. You can't get him out of his game plan. You can include him as one of the guys who hits hard, and I feel it. I can feel his punches. He's helped my career a lot because I've been fighting boxers, and he's helped me relax more. Our whole gym is like that. Everyone really helps out everyone. If I'm going to fight a boxer, learn to cut the ring off, sparring someone like Mikey in our gym helps me out there. It's why our gym is so great.

The Ring: Do you take a perverse pride in being involved in give-take slugfest?

BR: Yeah, I do *(laughs)*. When you come to a Brandon Rios fight, that's exactly what you will see, a slugfest. You're going to see a good show. I not only do it for myself but for my fans. It's nothing that I try to do, but just the style I have. I'll take two or three shots to land the one power shot. Give me someone like Mayweather. I'd hit someone like Mayweather. I'll hit him with low blows and slow him down. I'll make him fight. That's down the line, but that's a good idea to slow him down. I do take pride in the fact that when someone comes to see me, they're going to see a fight *(laughs)*.

The Ring: What do you think of the lightweight class?

BR: Right now, not much *(laughs)*. I guess I'm the king. Everyone wants to fight me. But we're losing everyone. Robert Guerrero is moving up. Humberto Soto won't fight me. John Murray just got knocked out, and Kevin Mitchell could be my next opponent. I'm making 135 easily, but I had to drop my underwear for two ounces against Antillon. I make it easy, and I'm keeping myself in shape. This is my first time with a strength and conditioning coach between fights. My lifestyle is a lot different than even three or five months ago. I'm listening to Robert outside the ring. Against Miguel Acosta, I didn't have a strength and conditioning coach, and I feel very strong and in great shape.

The Ring: Do you think steroids are a problem in boxing?

BR: I think steroids are still in boxing; they just have different ways of hiding it. I don't think about it. It's not in my hands. I don't think I've ever faced anyone on the stuff, but I think there have been guys I've seen recently on other stuff. There was one guy I saw at a recent fight, I swear I thought he was on cocaine *(laughs)*. He was taking a ton of punishment, and he wasn't going to go down *(laughs)*. I do know a lot of people in boxing from different gyms, and they talk about Manny Pacquiao being on the stuff. Personally, I don't think he's on the stuff, but you hear all of the other things from people in boxing. That's none of my concern. I just fight the guy they put in front of me.

The Ring: Do you think about leaving a legacy?

BR: I always think about that. I want to be remembered as the guy who always gave everything he had and was one hell of a fighter. I don't care whether I make pound-for-pound, but I want to be remembered as a great fighter who put on exciting fights and brought boxing back. ■

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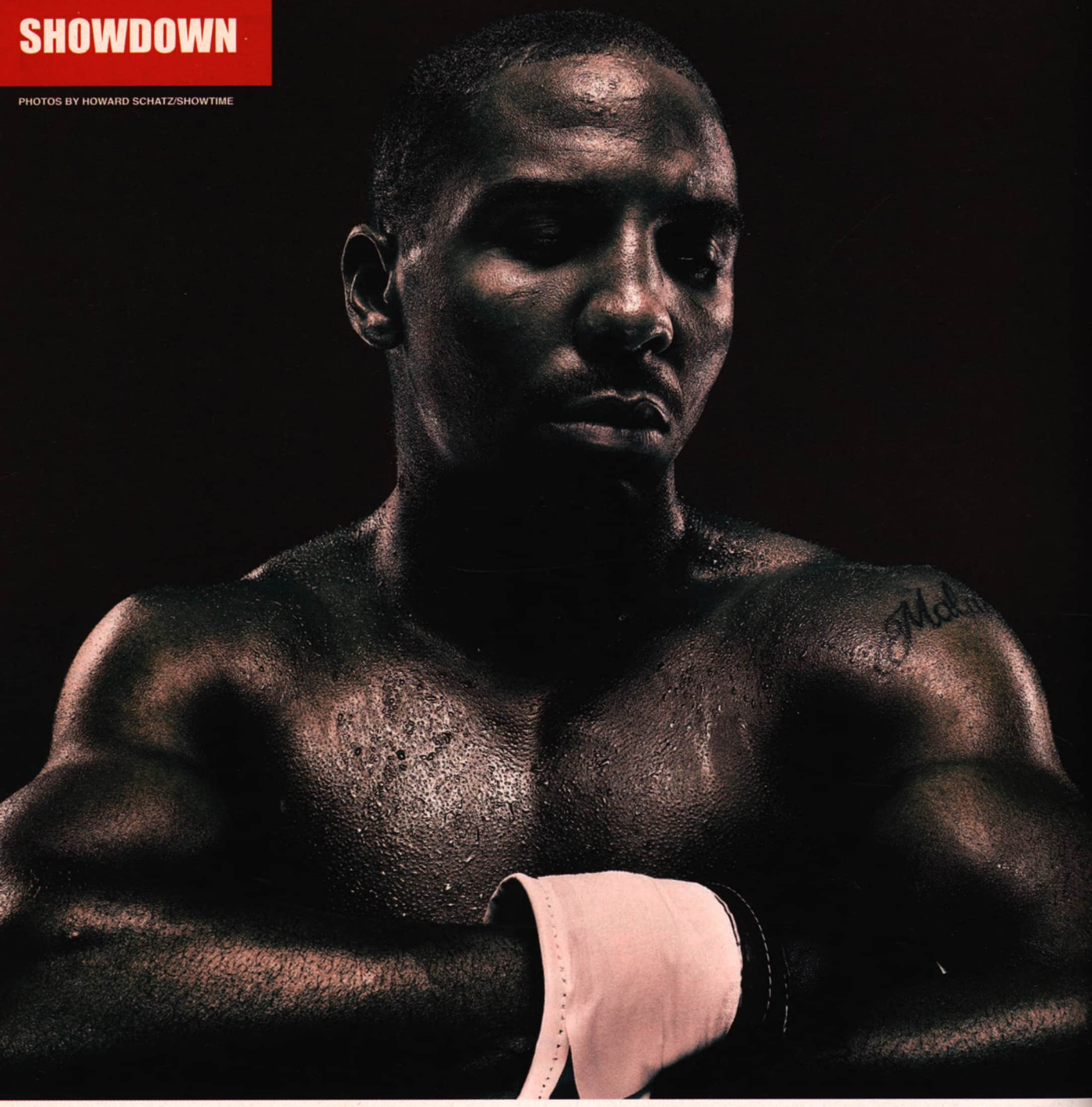

Andre Ward Main Event

The Ring Super Middleweight World Championship

There are no guarantees in boxing. You can go into something with the best of intentions and come out of it with the most miserable of failures. But every now and then, the best of intentions result in the most glorious of successes. As we count down the days until the final match of Showtime's "Super Six World Boxing Classic," this sure feels like a hard-earned triumph for boxing.

Despite numerous delays and dropouts, in the end, we're getting two undeniably worthy finalists in Andre Ward and Carl Froch, who were both in the Super Six from the beginning and, in a slight statistical anomaly, haven't already faced each other. Ward became the tournament's unofficial man to beat after his opening-round victory over Mikkel Kessler and proceeded to cruise past the field, barely

12 Rounds Carl Froch

losing a round. Froch overcame modest expectations from the public and the toughest possible road of opponents to earn his shot at the tournament's shiny silver cup.

And the beautiful part of how the Super Six worked out is that the cup isn't the only prize they're fighting for. Ward and Froch have climbed to the top two spots in THE RING *rankings, making this championship bout a championship bout in the truest sense, with the vacant* RING *title at stake.*

Showtime's ambitious two-year-long odyssey known as the Super Six will end on October 29 at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City. But with the way the tournament has succeeded in creating stars, the fun at 168 pounds is just beginning, no matter who ends up strapping on the belt and raising the trophy.

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

ANDRE WARD W 12 SAKIO BIKA
Ward keeps Bika on the end of his jab

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

ANDRE WARD W 12 ALLAN GREEN
Green gets roughed up on the inside

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSON/GETTY IMAGES

ANDRE WARD TECH. DEC. 11 MIKKEL KESSLER
Kessler's eye cuts forced a premature ending

ANDRE WARD

Record and World Rating

Is 24-0 with 13 knockouts … Started boxing at age 10 and enjoyed a spectacular amateur career that included national titles in 2001 and 2003 and the United States' lone gold medal at the '04 Olympics in Athens … After running his amateur record to a gaudy 114-5, turned pro on HBO in December '04 with a second-round stoppage of Chris Molina … Floated back and forth between middleweight and super middle for two years before settling at 168 and beating Jerson Ravelo (KO 8) for a regional belt in '08 … After just 20 fights, was invited to participate in the first-ever Super Six tournament … Upset Mikkel Kessler (Tech. Win 11) in the first round of the tourney to claim an alphabet belt, beat Allan Green (W 12) in the second round, and was awarded a walkover in the third round when Andre Dirrell dropped out, making "S.O.G." the top seed entering the semifinals with six points … Dominated Arthur Abraham (W 12) to earn his berth in the finals … Is rated number one at super middleweight and ninth pound-for-pound by THE RING.

Age and Physical Equipment

Is 27 years old … Stands 6' with a 71-inch reach … Sports a trim, well-defined, but not overly muscle-bound physique … Blessed with excellent hand speed and quick feet … Has just enough punching power to keep opponents honest, but no more than that … Appears to possess a sturdy chin, though it hasn't been tested much.

Best Weapons

The engine that makes everything else go is his boxing brain, which has concocted a versatile inside-outside game that leaves opponents with few options … Despite relative youth, is poised to the point of seeming utterly unflappable … An underrated bodypuncher … Hand speed is not quite all-time elite, but he's quicker than almost anyone in the division.

Previous Fight

Did as expected against Abraham in the Super Six semis, outboxing the one-dimensional German comfortably behind an effective jab … Abraham gave a determined effort to avoid his third straight loss, but he was overmatched … Scores were 120-108, 118-110, and 118-111.

Quality of Opposition

Olympic pedigree meant it would be hard to get away with feeding him total pushovers but still built up frustratingly slowly for first three years of pro career … Began to step up in '08 and '09, becoming a contender with wins over Rubin Williams (KO 7), Ravelo, Henry Buchanan (W 12), and Edison Miranda (W 12) … Kessler win to open Super Six is clearly the best of his career, but subsequent decisions over Green, Sakio Bika, and Abraham were all impressive shutouts or near-shutouts of world-class foes.

CARL FROCH

Record and World Rating

Is 28-1 with 20 knockouts … Started boxing at age nine and won Amateur Boxing Association of England middleweight titles in 1999 and 2001 … Captured bronze medal at '01 World Amateur Championships … Turned pro in March '02 with a fourth-round TKO of Michael Pinnock … Won Commonwealth super middleweight title in March '04 and British belt in September of that year, making seven defenses of the former and four of the latter … Defeated Jean Pascal (W 12) in a Fight of the Year candidate in December '08 to claim 168-pound alphabet belt … Rallied to stop Jermain Taylor (KO 12) in first defense, earning a spot in the Super Six … Went 2-1 in his three "Group Stage" fights, winning a close decision over Andre Dirrell, losing a tight decision to Mikkel Kessler, and easily outpointing Arthur Abraham … As tournament's second seed, defeated Glen Johnson (W 12) to advance to the finals … Is rated number two at super middleweight by THE RING.

Age and Physical Equipment

Is a fresh, well-preserved 34 years old … Stands 6'1" with a 75-inch reach … Very well-conditioned, with long arms and a lean, rangy build … Has almost a Thomas-Hearns-like puncher's physique but isn't really a one-shot kayo artist … Owns a first-rate chin, having handled the artillery of several prominent punchers.

Best Weapons

Confidence—sometimes spilling into outright cockiness—has served him well and helped him overachieve … Busy, aggressive, energetic attack was his hallmark for much of his career, but he's recently shown himself to have awkwardly effective boxing skills as well … Good punching power, particularly in the right hand … Skilled at maneuvering around the ring and gauging distance.

Previous Fight

Was forced to work hard to beat old warhorse Johnson in the Super Six semifinals and did precisely that, earning the win by scores of 116-112, 117-111, and 114-114 … Fell behind a bit early, but he rallied and swept the late rounds … All-action eighth round possibly a Round of the Year candidate.

Quality of Opposition

You can make a case that nobody in boxing has been matched tougher the last three years, thanks to six-fight run against Pascal, Taylor, Dirrell, Kessler, Abraham, and Johnson (during which "The Cobra" has gone 5-1) … Fought the usual local suspects in the UK early on—first five opponents all had losing records—but eventually built to recognizable names like Brian Magee (KO 11), Sergey Tatevosyan (KO 2), and a faded Robin Reid (KO 5).

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

CARL FROCH W 12 GLEN JOHNSON
Froch closed well to outpoint "The Road Warrior"

PHOTO BY MARTIN ROSE/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

CARL FROCH W 12 ARTHUR ALEXANDER
Froch dominated Arthur with smart boxing

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

CARL FROCH KO 12 JERMAIN TAYLOR
"The Cobra" came off the floor to stop Taylor

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ANDRE WARD

Defense

Excellent reflexes and old-school technique make him one of today's top defensive fighters ... From a distance, eludes punches with deft footwork, slick parrying, and upper-body movement ... At close range has mastered the art of tying opponents up with one arm and punching them with his free hand.

Style

You could probably call him a boxer-mauler ... Boasts a combination of precise technique and elite athleticism that makes him a favorite to win any chess match but also likes to go inside and get rough in a way occasionally reminiscent of Bernard Hopkins ... Doesn't waste punches and doesn't waste energy throwing them harder than he has to; is perfectly content to win a lopsided decision with stamina to spare rather than gunning for a knockout.

The Questions

Is he in trouble if his punches lack the pop to discourage the strong-willed, sturdy-chinned Froch? Does it matter that he's fighting outside his home state of California for the first time since '08? Could he lose a controversial decision by being outworked (see Paul Williams-Erislandy Lara in Atlantic City)? Can he thrive on the outside despite giving up four inches in reach?

CARL FROCH

Defense

Though he often holds his hands below his waist, a cardinal sin of boxing defense, he generally only does it when he's at a safe distance or doesn't feel threatened ... Uses legs well to avoid heavy shots but doesn't move his head enough ... Strong belief in his own chin means he tends to get hit a bit more than he has to.

Style

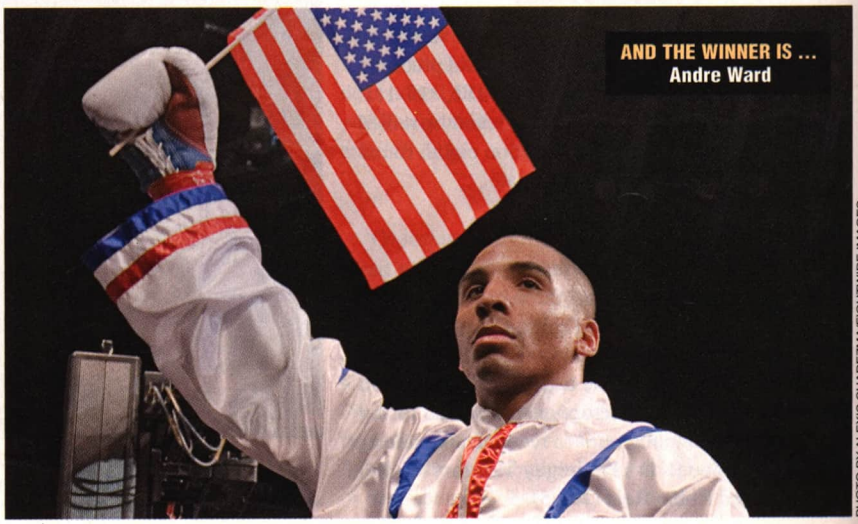
Has shown in recent fights that he's not the raw slugger he once appeared to be but is actually a versatile boxer-puncher with an awkward rhythm that keeps opponents off balance ... Still happy to take a punch to land one at least a few times in every fight ... Will overwhelm with volume in spots but also tends to lose focus and take occasional rounds off ... A decent finisher, though it must be noted that his last four fights have all gone the distance.

The Questions

Does he have what it takes to win at least seven rounds against a guy so skilled he rarely loses more than a round or two? Are his hands fast enough to find Ward with clean, effective punches? Is he toast if he gets off to another slow start against an opponent this confident? If he does manage to tap Ward's chin—as Darnell Boone did back in '05—can he finish him off?

THE OUTCOME

This proves to be the toughest Super Six match for both guys—which is problematic for Froch, since he's already lost once in the tourney. Froch elects to implement his pressure-fighting style rather than trying to outbox Ward, which forces the American to find another gear. Ward does just that, using precision punching to overcome the rough spots, withstand a late surge from Froch, and win a competitive but unanimous decision.



AND THE WINNER IS ... Andre Ward

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WORLDWIDE FIGHT RESULTS

Heavyweights

Alexander Ustinov KO 2 Akmal Aslanov
Monte Barrett W 12 David Tua
Amir Mansour W 10 Dominick Guinn
Oliver McCall W 10 Damian Wills
Ken Frank W 10 Sheldon Hinton
Luis Ortiz KO 7 Arron Lyons
Mariusz Wach KO 4 Kevin McBride
Eric Molina KO 3 Warren Browning
Kevin Ferguson KO 1 James Wade
Nicolai Firtha W 6 Ross Thompson

Cruiserweights

Allan Green KO 2 Craig Gandy
Montell Griffin W 8 DeAndrey Abron
Krzysztof Glowacki KO 9 Roman Kracik
Matty Askin KO 4 Juan Manuel Garay
Ruben Angel Mino KO 1 Miguel Angel Morell

Light Heavyweights

Beibut Shumenov KO 9 Danny Santiago
Yordanis Despaigne W Disq. 5 Edison Miranda
Blake Caparello W 12 Joseph Kwadjo
Edwin Rodriguez KO 2 Chris Traietti
Sergey Kovalev KO 2 Douglas Otieno
Rayco Saunders W 8 Daniel Judah

Super Middleweights

Brian Magee W 12 Jaime Barboza
Zac Awad W 12 Junior Talipeau
Guillermo Romero KO 9 Bladimir Hernandez
Roberto De Titto KO 2 Daniel Arruda

Middleweights

Elvin Ayala W 10 Derrick Findley
Koji Sato KO 6 Fukutaro Ujiie
Yory Boy Campas KO 3 Marcelo Rodriguez
Job Mazeo KO 2 Paulo Bueno
Mamadou Thiam KO 1 Mihalj Halas

Junior Middleweights

Alfredo Angulo KO 1 Joseph Gomez
Demetrius Andrade W 10 Grady Brewer
Kermit Cintron W 10 Antwone Smith
Michel Soro W 12 David Makaradze
Sergio Sanders W 10 Alejandro Falliga
Antonio Diaz KO 8 Ernesto Zepeda
Charlie Ota KO 6 Akio Shibata
Henry Coyle KO 5 Elio Cotena
Zaurbek Baysangurov KO 1 Mike Miranda
Javier Maciel KO 1 Jonata De Oliveira

Welterweights

Matthew Hatton W 12 Andrei Abramenka
Jorge Silva KO 8 Alvaro Robles
Jimrex Jaca KO 3 Felipe Demecillo
Diego Chaves KO 9 Eduardo Flores
Ravshan Hudaynazarov W 10 Hector Munoz
Ed Paredes KO 8 Juliano Ramos
Hector Saldivia KO 5 Emilio Julio Julio
Akinori Watanabe KO 4 Jung-Hoon Yang
Ionut Dan Ion KO 3 Iwan Azore
Luis Abregu KO 2 Walter Diaz
Gumersindo Carrasco KO 2 Daniel Santos
Franklin Mamani KO 2 Miguel Lombardo
Artemio Reyes KO 2 Miguel Angel Munguia
Dennis Laurente KO 1 Cris Alag
Jean Carlos Prada KO 1 Jose Soto

Junior Welterweights

Lamont Peterson KO 12 Victor Manuel Cayo
Michael Katsidis KO 3 Michael Lozada
Mike Alvarado W 10 Gabriel Martinez
Vernon Paris KO 7 Tim Coleman
Edgar Santana KO 5 Omri Lowther
Richard Abril KO 5 Sergio Rivera
Dannie Williams KO 4 Antonio Cervantes
Karen Tevosyan KO 3 Hurshid Madaminov
Carlos Zarate Jr. KO 2 Jose Davila
Layla McCarter W 8 Belinda Laracuente

Lightweights

Derry Mathews KO 6 Stephen Jennings
Daniel Brizuela W 12 Julio Ruiz
Richard Abril W 11 Julio Camano
Aaron Herrera W 10 Carlos Wiston Velasquez
Ameth Diaz KO 5 Leonardo Zappavigna
Mike Faragon KO 2 Ira Terry
Kosuke Iwashita Tech. Win 8 Akinori Kanai
Henry Lundy KO 6 David Diaz
Rey Labao Tech. Win 5 Jose Ocampo
Alejandra Oliveras KO 5 Liliana Palmera
Juan Witt KO 5 Nestor Silva Diaz
Mason Menard KO 4 Joseph Laryea
Massimiliano Ballisai KO 2 Luca Marasco
Rances Barthelemy W 8 Gerardo Robles

Junior Lightweights

Fahsai Sakkreerin W 12 Rivo Rengkung
Rafael Guzman D 12 Rafael Hernandez
Tony Fernandez KO 7 Galo Ayala
Miguel Roman KO 7 Abraham Rodriguez
Cristobal Cruz Tech. Draw 4 Art Hovhannisyan
Bryan Vazquez W 11 Alan Herrera
Jose Felix Jr KO 1 Juan Velasquez
James Bacon KO 1 Elmer Legaria

Featherweights

Billy Dib W 12 Jorge Lacierva
Ryol Li Lee KO 5 Rikiya Fukuhara

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Abner Mares W 12 Joseph Agbeko
Nobuo Nashiro W 10 Rey Perez
Eric Morel KO 4 Daniel Quevedo
Armando Casa W 10 Rodel Quilaton
AJ Banal Tech. Win 8 Tyson Cave

Jerwin Ancajas KO 8 Jason Egera
Rolly Matsushita KO 8 Zerofit Zuiyama
Tabtimdaeng Na Rachawat KO 3 Iwan Key
Marco Demecillo KO 2 Nelson Llanos
Ana Maria Torres W 10 Jackie Nava
Kaliesha West W 10 Jessica Villafranca

ZONING IN Bantamweight Eric Morel takes aim at Daniel Quevedo en route to a fourth-round TKO. It marked Morel's 10th-straight victory.

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

Salvador Sanchez KO 3 Adan Garcia
Jack Asis KO 2 Nestor Rocha
Ayup Arsaev W 10 Farhod Oripov
Makoto Fuchigami KO 6 Takayuki Hosokawa
Robert Marroquin W 8 Jose Beranza
Evgeny Gradovich W 8 Robert DaLuz

Junior Featherweights

Fernando Montiel KO 3 Alvaro Perez
Alejandro Lopez W 12 Teon Kennedy
Roli Gasca W 12 Hiromasa Ohashi
Yuki Murai W 10 Kentaro Oku
Eden Sonsona W 10 Eman Labanza
Sergio Sain W 12 Orlando Maciel
Cesar Seda W 10 Jose Silveira
Efrain Esquivias W 10 Juan Ruiz
Sod Kokietgym KO 4 James Mokoginta

Junior Bantamweights

Suriyan Sor Rungvisai W 12 Tomas Rojas
Oleydong Sithsamerchai W 12 Mark Geraldo
Juan Mercedes W 10 Luis Maldonado
Luis Concepcion KO 1 Manuel Vargas
Rodel Mayol W 10 Jayson Rotoni

Roemart Sentillas W 10 Noel Adelmita
Juan Jose Montes KO 2 Sammy Reyes
Alonso Lopez KO 1 Leroy Zavala
Jose Salgado KO 1 Carlos Ariel Farias

Flyweights

Pongsaklek Wonjongkam KO 1 Pakasit Twins Gym
(Non-Title Fight)
Rocky Fuentes W 12 Hirofumi Mukai
Panomroonglek Hadaogym W 12 Koki Eto
Arely Mucino W 10 Susana Vazquez
Froilan Saludar KO 10 Gabriel Pumar

Junior Flyweights

Masayuki Kuroda W 10 Yuki Sano
Sammy Gutierrez KO 3 Rafael Orozco
Randy Petalcorin W Disq. 8 Michael Rodriguez

Strawweights

Kazuto Ioka W 12 Juan Hernandez
Juan Palacios KO 9 Armando Torres
Pornsawan Porpramook W 12 Muhammad Rachman
Jesus Silvestre KO 2 Walter Rojas

RINGSIDE REPORTS

Compiled by Don Stewart

PHOTO BY MARTIN MCNEIL/GETTY IMAGES

FIGHTING FURY
Chisora covers up as Fury attacks

Tyson Fury W 12 Dereck Chisora

There's a lot to like about Fury's British heavyweight title win against Chisora. The 22-year-old Fury's high work rate and willingness to slug it out ensured that, despite too much mauling and clinching in the second half, the event was always intriguing. It was thoroughly enjoyed by a capacity crowd and three million viewers who watched it for free on Channel 5 in the United Kingdom.

It showed that the 6'9" Irish Englishman has made considerable progress—better footwork, sharper reflexes, improved accuracy, more combination punching, quicker fists, and a new focus on bodypunching. At a relatively sleek 255½ pounds, he looked a good deal fitter than before, though he still has a bit of puppy fat around the gills. Moreover, his chin stood up to some meaty whacks from a noted banger.

However, any talk of taking on Wladimir Klitschko should be shelved. Fury is still at the prospect stage—ahead of his Olympic bronze medalist countryman David Price and America's Olympic bronze medalist Deontay Wilder (both men he says he'd love to face), but behind more seasoned prospects such as Dennis Boytsov, Robert Helenius, and Mike Perez.

Fury still tends to arm punch, his jab is too often of the prodding and poking variety, and there's plenty more work to be done on defense.

Chisora was the bookies' favorite, but he'd been out of action for 10 months, a result of two canceled title fights against Wladimir Klitschko. When he weighed a career high of 261 pounds, the odds began to shift. He did not look fat, but he was clearly carrying too much for his 6'1" frame. The result was that he showed less mobility and head movement than usual, and his work rate was too low.

Chisora seemed intent on scoring an early knockout but was outboxed in the first, with Fury making good use of his 11-inch reach advantage. But in the second, Chisora landed a leaping left hook, followed by a heavy right. Fury's eyes betrayed shock as he absorbed a flurry of head blows. He soon began to fire back, only to be met with the hardest punch of the fight, an overhand right that landed flush. Fury's head rocked back and he stumbled, but, despite taking several more big swings, he kept punching.

From the third onwards, the Zimbabwe-born titleholder was reduced to momentary success. He stunned his tormentor with a leaping left hook in round four, but, for the most part, it was Fury who was landing. As the rounds progressed, the tiring Chisora seemed discouraged. Each time he tried to mount an attack, it was met with stiff counters.

In the second half, Fury also began to tire and did much of his fighting up close—proving to be a capable infighter—with his efforts punctuated by plenty of clinches. Chisora made his last bid in the 10th, exploding off the ropes with a series of big hooks. Again, there was that momentary look of panic on Fury's face and again he settled quickly and soon resumed control, dominating the championship rounds.

The English judges all scored it decisively for Fury. Ian John-Lewis and Phil Edwards each had it 117-112, while Richard James Davies scored it 118-111. THE RING agreed with Davies' tally.

Gavin Evans

MATCH STATS

Division: Heavyweight • **Location:** London, England
Date: July 23, 2011 • **Television:** Pay-Per-View
Promoter: Hennessy Sports • **Referee:** Victor Loughlin (Scotland)

Tyson Fury	Dereck Chisora
Age: 23	**Age:** 27
Weight: 255½	**Weight:** 261
Residence: Wilmslow, England	**Residence:** Finchley, England
Birthplace: Manchester, England	**Birthplace:** Zimbabwe
Record: 15-0 (10)	**Record:** 14-1 (9)

Kazuto Ioka W 12 Juan Hernandez

Unbeaten strawweight Ioka retained the WBC 105-pound belt as he pounded out an impressive unanimous decision against mandatory challenger Hernandez, a hard-hitting Mexican switch-hitter, over 12 fast rounds at Korakuen Hall.

For Ioka, the nephew of former strawweight and junior flyweight beltholder Hiroki Ioka, it was his first defense since dethroning previously unbeaten Oleydong Sithsamerchai with a single bodyshot in five rounds back in February. The Mexican challenger, who had gone five years without a loss, predicted at the prefight press conference: "I'll knock him out within the first three rounds to bring the belt to Mexico."

Ioka started cautiously as he attempted to feel out his fast-moving and hard-punching challenger. Hernandez got off to a good start as he had Ioka reeling against the ropes with a solid left hook thrown just after switching to a southpaw stance in the closing seconds of the opening session. But Ioka, from the second round on, cleverly responded to the Mexican's versatile strategy by maintaining the pressure and tagging the circling Hernandez with sharp, precise jabs.

The aggressive Hernandez tried to make good on his bold prediction. His hand speed, power, and work rate were strong enough. But Ioka, an excellent counterpuncher coached by Cuban trainer Ismael Salas, connected with a beautiful right-left-right combination in the second and with a well-timed left hook in the fourth. When the official tallies were announced after the fourth, Ioka led on all three cards: 39-38 and 39-37 (twice).

The shorter Hernandez began to bleed from the nostrils early, and blood continued to stream from his nose as a result of Ioka's jabs and combos, which landed with more frequency as the contest progressed. Hernandez furiously attacked Ioka in round five, but Ioka showed his composure and coolness in defending himself with his tight guard and fluid body movement and landed a very solid left-right combination to the face just before the bell.

PHOTO BY YOSHIKZU TSUNO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

HEAD-TO-HEAD
Ioka forces Hernandez into the ropes

In the sixth through the eighth, it was all Ioka. He kept applying the pressure with stinging lefts and accurate combos that had Hernandez retreating and circling away. Ioka enjoyed his best round in the eighth, when he let loose with a flurry of punches as if he intended to finish off Hernandez then and there. But Hernandez displayed his great heart in withstanding Ioka's assault. After the eighth, Ioka was still leading on points: 79-74 and 78-74 (twice).

Ioka kept stalking the constantly moving Hernandez and threw more punches than his opponent, who occasionally responded with a few solid but less accurate shots in round nine. In the 10th, Hernandez

Lamont Peterson KO 12 Victor Cayo

This bout was originally scheduled to take place at the Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas in April with ESPN2 televising, but Cayo had to postpone due to a shoulder injury. Three months later, the same network and the same venue were available, and Cayo was left wishing he'd had the same injury to scuttle the fight because Peterson turned in perhaps the best all-around performance of his career and set Cayo's career back with a 12th-round knockout win.

The quality match between quick-fisted, skilled junior welterweights produced steady action and was competitive all the way, but the technical superiority of Peterson allowed him to gradually take over en route to the emphatic final-round stoppage.

With 30 seconds remaining in the opening round, Peterson landed a 1-2 combination that dropped Cayo, but referee Kenny Bayless made an outstanding call, correctly ruling that Peterson's right hand landed behind the head and cuffed "Mermelada" down. Cayo's best work of the fight came in the next two rounds, when his potshots piled up the points for him. Though Cayo's form was highly flawed—wide, looping shots from both sides, a right uppercut in the third round fired from all the way down at his knee—Peterson couldn't quite gauge how to time the awkward Dominican and capitalize on his mistakes.

Starting in round four, however, Peterson developed a better handle on his opponent. There weren't many landslide rounds, but, in one after another, Peterson seemed to do enough to earn the point, frequently rallying late to make the difference. His bodywork was especially noteworthy. By round seven, Peterson was truly committing to the rib rattlers, getting inside and using his superior strength to push Cayo around. With the fight slipping away, Cayo grew more aggressive in the 10th and probably earned the round, but Peterson reclaimed control in the 11th with aggression and more searing bodyshots.

By the 12th, all those bodypunches had taken a toll on Cayo. Peterson sensed it and happened to be in no mood to find out what the judges were thinking. So, though he's not known as a puncher, Peterson gunned for the knockout. About 40 seconds into the round, he wobbled Cayo with a right hand. Cayo appeared to survive the crisis until, with a minute to go in the fight, Peterson hurt him again with a combination. Cayo took a heavy right hand and had to hold, but Peterson broke free, dug to the body, and then came upstairs with uppercuts and another vicious right. Cayo dropped to a knee and didn't get up until just after Bayless finished the count at the 2:46 mark of the round.

The win made Peterson a mandatory challenger for one of the belts held by Amir Khan. Peterson, whose draw against Victor Ortiz

MATCH STATS

Division: Strawweight • **Location:** Tokyo, Japan
Date: August 10, 2011 • **Promoter:** MG Promotions
Referee: Malcolm Bulner (Australia)

Kazuto Ioka
Age: 22 • **Weight:** 104½
Residence: Osaka, Japan
Birthplace: Sakai, Japan
Record: 8-0 (5) • **RING Ranking:** 2

Juan Hernandez
Age: 24 • **Weight:** 104½
Residence: Mexico City, Mexico
Birthplace: Morelia, Mexico
Record: 18-2 (13)

unloaded with a desperate do-or-die attack, but Ioka weathered the furious rally with his tight guard and shift mobility. One shot from Hernandez, however, opened a slight cut above Ioka's right eyebrow.

Ioka had Hernandez in trouble in round 11 with a barrage of punches. He landed effective combinations upstairs and downstairs and had Hernandez constantly backpedaling. Ioka was also in command in the final round as he sealed his victory and initial defense. Hubert Minn (USA) scored it 117-111, Glen Rick Crocker (USA) had it 116-112, and Bernie McMahon (Australia) saw it 118-111, all in the Ioka's favor.

"I wish to keep myself aggressive even in the last round to entertain the crowd," the jubilant Ioka said afterward.

"Ioka had a strong right hand and was faster than I expected," the crestfallen Hernandez said. "I should have gone forward more to win with my stronger heart."

Joe Koizumi

MATCH STATS

Division: Junior Welterweight
Location: Las Vegas, NV • **Date:** July 29, 2011
Television: ESPN2 • **Promoter:** Warriors Boxing
Referee: Kenny Bayless (NV)

Lamont Peterson
Age: 27 • **Weight:** 140
Residence: Memphis, TN
Birthplace: Washington, D.C.
Record: 29-1-1 (15) • **RING Ranking:** 7

Victor Cayo
Age: 26 • **Weight:** 139½
Residence: Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
Birthplace: Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
Record: 26-2 (18)

in December 2010 looks a lot better now than it did at the time, is reasonably deserving as alphabet mandatories go. And a Khan-Peterson fight would be useful to fans as a measuring stick, since Peterson dropped a wide decision to Timothy Bradley in '09 in his only professional loss so far.

Alejandro Lopez W 12 Teon Kennedy

After recent stomach-turning decisions such as Devon Alexander-Walter Matthysse and Paul Williams-Erislandy Lara, Lopez' venture into the backyard of unbeaten local favorite Kennedy might have seemed like reckless endangerment. Lacking knockout power to underscore his punches against the strong and rugged favorite, Lopez would have to rely as much on the judges as on his own skills. The contest itself fit the mold perfectly: a display of boxing style and strategy over aggression and trench warfare.

The bout produced relatively little punching and no sustained trading, yet held the full house at Bally's spellbound with the suspense of watching a man on a tightrope. Lopez circled relentlessly without losing a step. He popped just enough judicious punches to control most of the rounds. Still, both of Kennedy's eyes were closing by the late sessions. Despite the esteemed Naazim Richardson in his corner, Kennedy followed Lopez around and was never able to cut him off. In the middle of the third, Lopez stopped long enough to fire a volley of quick lefts and rights that backed Kennedy off and set the pattern. In the fifth, Lopez added razzle-dazzle to his routine with the Ali shuffle and a twirling right hand that punctuated the favorite's frustration. The fans pulled for Kennedy but respected Lopez' abilities.

Kennedy's chances faded over the second half of the bout. He continued trying to corral Lopez on the ropes or get him to fight inside, but it just wasn't happening as Kennedy's slide in the scoring continued. Fans squawked at Lopez for holding in the 11th as he effectively shut down any chance for infighting. But in the final round, Lopez put on a show of precision punching that closed the door on Kennedy with a bang.

There was an air of dread as the judges' final scores were tallied, but announcer Lupe Contreras' upbeat lead-in to the verdict seemed reassuring. This one could have been stolen, but Lynne Carter and Lawrence Layton scored 117-111, and John Poturaj 115-113 for the deserving visitor. This time, the judges got one right.

J.R. Jowett

MATCH STATS

Division: Junior Featherweight
Location: Atlantic City, NJ
Date: August 13, 2011
Television: Fox Deportes/Fox Sports Net
Promoters: Peltz Boxing, Top Rank
Referee: Earl Morton (NJ)

Alejandro Lopez
Age: 24 • **Weight:** 121½
Residence: Tijuana, Mexico
Birthplace: Tijuana, Mexico
Record: 22-2 (7)

Teon Kennedy
Age: 25 • **Weight:** 121½
Residence: Philadelphia, PA
Birthplace: Philadelphia, PA
Record: 17-1-1 (7)

Orlando Salido KO 11 Kenichi Yamaguchi

For Salido, the circumstances surrounding his bout with Yamaguchi were unlike any he had experienced in his 15-year career.

Often during his seven years at the world-class level, he's been the underdog challenger fighting uphill battles away from his native Ciudad Obregon, Mexico, against titlists thought to be more talented and worthy of fame than he. Now, thanks to his monumental upset of Juan Manuel Lopez in April, Salido was the defending WBO featherweight beltholder, the prohibitive betting favorite, the hometown hero, and the man fighting for something more than mere victory.

With a lucrative rematch with Lopez looming (and with "JuanMa" watching at ringside) it would have been easy for Salido to lose focus against the unheralded Japanese trickster. Instead, Salido maintained a veteran's cool, scored a third-round knockdown, and issued a methodical beating en route to an 11th round TKO at Centro de Usos Multiples.

Yamaguchi entered the ring in ninja garb, but, once the bell sounded, he was boxing's equivalent of a junkball pitcher. He employed in-and-out footwork, rolled his gloves before throwing punches from strange angles, switched to southpaw, and repeatedly lunged in with punches after springing from a crouch.

Salido responded with customary aplomb. A right to the jaw sent Yamaguchi tumbling two minutes into round three, and his short, sharp punches combined with constant pressure gradually slowed Yamaguchi's movement. Yamaguchi appeared fatigued by the fifth, but he stubbornly hung in with pitty-pat blows and plenty of courage. An accidental butt in the sixth opened a deep slice above Yamaguchi's left eye, and Salido, perhaps too anxious to score an eye-catching kayo, missed with wide shots over the top.

From the seventh onward, the fight assumed a familiar pattern: Yamaguchi would slip, slide, and hustle in the first two minutes only to have Salido rally strongly over the final 60 seconds. Yamaguchi sneaked in enough punches to swell Salido's right eye in the ninth, but, in the 10th, the beltholder turned to an underused weapon—a sharp, thudding jab—to better set up his grinding attack.

Another Salido barrage had Yamaguchi on the verge of defeat late in the 10th, and Salido's bodyshots left Yamaguchi hunched and flinching in the 11th. A 22-punch assault persuaded referee Roberto Ramirez Jr. to wave off the bout at the 2:50 mark, cementing the Lopez rematch and returning Salido to his familiar and comfortable underdog role.

Antonio Tarver KO 9 Danny Green

Former world light heavyweight champion Tarver was a man on a mission when he headed to Australia for his first professional match outside the United States. "I am going to take this fight into my own hands," he said. "It is the only way I can secure victory."

The 42-year-old Tarver was extremely accurate with his prefight prediction as he stopped Aussie favorite Green at the end of round nine to completely silence more than 7,000 local fans at the Entertainment Centre.

While Green weighed in at a career high, it was Tarver who looked the physically bigger man inside the ring. The southpaw towered over Green and worked his right-hand jab hard. The 38-year-old Green came forward freely in round one, working to the head and body, but the experienced Tarver simply tied him up confidently on the inside.

With 50 seconds remaining, Tarver clubbed Green back into the ropes with a lead left hand. It was not recorded as an official knockdown, but it changed the fight's direction.

Green landed two strong right hands in round two that had Tarver covering up. But halfway through the round, Green crashed to the canvas after receiving a perfectly timed left uppercut from Tarver that landed under his chin. It was only the second knockdown of his career. Green jumped straight back to his feet but was hurt and looked to hold on when the action resumed after the referee's mandatory eight count.

Round after round, the superbly skilled Tarver continued to wear down Green, keeping him off balance with his jab and hurting him with his left hand. Green's best round was the seventh. Working the body early, he had Tarver backing up, and a lead right hook flush on the jaw hurt Tarver. The American was noticeably crouching down low, instead of using his height, and he was warned by referee Howard Foster for holding. Any momentum that Green had secured evaporated in round eight, however, as Tarver regained control of the fight, reestablishing his forceful jab.

In the final minute of round nine, Tarver backed Green into the ropes. A left hand clean on the jaw badly stunned the Aussie. Tarver attacked, and Green bobbled along the ropes. Another vicious left hand landed, and Green remained upright through sheer force of will. Saved by the bell, Green stumbled to the wrong corner not knowing where he was and hugged Tarver. He was rescued by his own cornermen, who walked him back to his stool and wisely stopped the fight.

The win was another milestone on Tarver's resume and something else that archrival Roy Jones had failed to do Down Under 18 months earlier when Green stopped the former champ in one round.

"He hurt me twice, but I couldn't show it," admitted Tarver, who had signed a contract guaranteeing Green a rematch. "If he gets healthy and fit, who knows? If he calls me, maybe I'll come back."

"I'm so gutted I couldn't do it for you guys," a stunned Green told the crowd. "I'm so sorry."

Paul Upham

MATCH STATS

Division: Featherweight
Location:
Ciudad Obregon, Mexico
Date: July 23, 2011
Television: Fox Deportes
Promoter: Top Rank
Referee: Roberto Ramirez Jr.
(Puerto Rico)

Orlando Salido
Age: 30
Weight: 126
Residcence:
Ciudad Obregon, Mexico
Birthplace:
Ciudad Obregon, Mexico
Record: 36-11-2 (24)
Ring Ranking: 3

Kenichi Yamaguchi
Age: 31
Weight: 126
Residence: Osaka, Japan
Birthplace: Osaka, Japan
Record: 17-2-2 (4)

MATCH STATS

Division: Cruiserweight
Location:
Sydney, Australia
Date: July 20, 2011
Promoter:
Green Machine Boxing
Referee:
Howard John Foster
(England)

Antonio Tarver
Age: 42
Weight: 197¾
Residence: Tampa, FL
Birthplace: Orlando, FL
Record: 29-6 (20)
Ring Ranking: 6

Danny Green
Age: 38 • **Weight:** 199
Residence:
Perth, Australia
Birthplace:
Perth, Australia
Record: 31-4 (27)
Ring Ranking: 10

GUNNING FOR GREEN
Tarver advances en route to TKO of Green

PHOTO BY TORSTEN BLACKWOOD/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

"PIT BULL" TAMED
Referee Stell counts over Coleman

PHOTO BY DWIGHT MCCANN/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Vernon Paris KO 7 Tim Coleman

Paris and Coleman traded some vicious smack talk in the weeks leading up to their *Friday Night Fights* main event at Chumash Casino, including a statement by Coleman that he hoped Paris would be "the first man I beat to death in the ring." Having survived a shooting and a stabbing, "IceMan" Paris wasn't going to be fazed by Coleman's words.

"That just put it in me more to want to really destroy him and show him that he's not on my level," Paris said in the postfight interview. "I'm on a whole other level. Even though he's older than me, I'm way more mature than he is."

The 23-year-old Paris rallied from a second-round knockdown, scoring three knockdowns with bodyshots to stop Coleman in their junior welterweight grudge match. It was a significant step forward for the unbeaten Paris, given that Coleman had won five straight and was considered a hot fighter.

The two were originally supposed to clash on the Tim Bradley-Devon Alexander undercard in January, but Coleman withdrew, citing a shoulder injury. As the rescheduled bout drew closer, the two traded barbs on Facebook. A fight erupted the day before the fight when the two camps crossed paths at the Chumash Hotel. The two fighters were moved to different hotels, and officials weighed them in separately to avoid another prefight clash.

The two went right at it in the opening round, with Coleman firing left hooks as Paris tried to jab. Coleman scored with a series of hard right hands upstairs late, and Paris connected with a right to the chin off a bodyshot near the bell. Coleman continued to slug away in the second when he landed a short right-hand counter to the chin that momentarily stunned Paris, causing his gloves to touch the floor for a knockdown. Paris went right back to work after the mandatory eight count, seemingly unhurt.

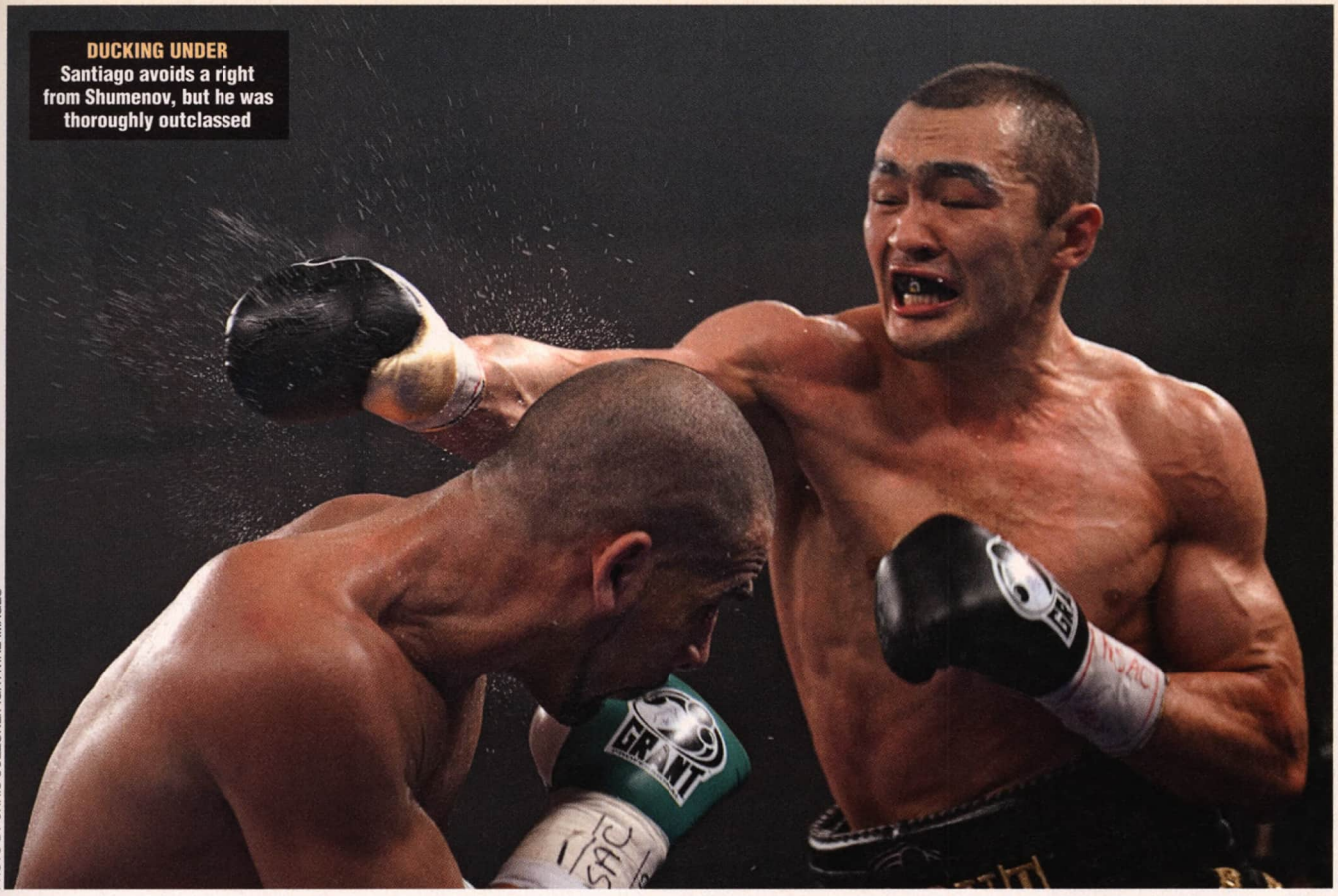
The next three rounds were close. Coleman was the aggressor who landed the bigger shots, while Paris remained committed to the jab and body attack. Paris took command in the sixth, however, when he repeatedly scored with clean shots upstairs that spun Coleman's head. Coleman remained upright, however, until a Paris left hook below the armpit put him on his hands and knees 36 seconds before the bell. Despite rising at six, Coleman was still hurt. Paris landed the same punch in the final seconds of the round, putting Coleman on his knees. "Pit Bull" rose at five and was rescued by the bell. Paris landed 25-of-54 punches in the round, according to CompuBox.

"I'm good! I'm good!" Coleman screamed to his corner between rounds. He wasn't. Coleman started the seventh round clearly protecting his right side, but it took Paris little time to land another left hook to the body that put Coleman down for a third time. Referee Dan Stell immediately stopped the fight 27 seconds into the round.

"I started to see that every time that I would come in, he would bring his elbows too close in," Paris said. "I couldn't get him with the right to the body, so I started throwing with the left." It left Coleman hurting, his mouth temporarily silenced as Paris celebrated the biggest win of his career.

MATCH STATS

	Vernon Paris	Tim Coleman
Division: Junior Welterweight	**Age:** 23	**Age:** 27
Location: Santa Ynez, CA	**Weight:** 140	**Weight:** 140
Date: August 5, 2011	**Residence:** Detroit, MI	**Residence:** Baltimore, MD
Television: ESPN2	**Birthplace:** Detroit, MI	**Birthplace:** Baltimore, MD
Promoter: Gary Shaw Productions	**Record:** 25-0 (15)	**Record:** 19-2-1 (5)
Referee: Dan Stell (CA)		



DUCKING UNDER
Santiago avoids a right from Shumenov, but he was thoroughly outclassed

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Beibut Shumenov KO 9 Danny Santiago

Dominating every round before a 23-punch barrage in round nine had referee Tony Weeks waving off the slaughter, light heavyweight Shumenov retained the WBA light heavyweight belt for the third time with a stoppage of "Bronx Bomber" Santiago at the South Point Hotel Casino.

Santiago had his moments but could not figure out a way to stem the Kazakhstani titlist's aggression. After weathering a very early attack, Shumenov worked his jab, created the distance he needed, and then sat back and took his time pounding away at Santiago, who stayed at range like a good opponent following the script.

Santiago could not find a way to close the distance; at every attempt, he found himself at the end of a jab, a straight right, or a choppy left hand. Kept at bay, Santiago followed Shumenov around, hoping to land his own right. It was a tactical fight of rights through the first five rounds until a big one from Shumenov staggered Santiago at the end of the fifth.

Santiago came out with a mouse under his right eye in the sixth but continued walking into punches. Desperate, Santiago made round seven close by staggering Shumenov with a rarely thrown left hook. Revving up the pro-Shumenov crowd, Santiago drew an imaginary line on the canvas with his foot, as if to say, "Let's fight," but, one round later, it was more like, "All right, you win."

Santiago pocketed his hook and went back to walking into punches in the eighth. Early into the ninth, Shumenov unleashed his final barrage, and the fight was called off at the 46-second mark.

"My eye bothered me, and I couldn't see the punches at the end," Santiago said. "He's a great fighter and has good technique."

Shumenov said Santiago proved tougher than expected. "He was durable and can take punches," he said. "It wasn't what I expected, but I could've thrown more punches."

Watching the fight from ringside and joining Shumenov in the ring was former champ Jean Pascal.

"I want to fight you in Canada," he told Shumenov.

"You fight in Canada. I am from Kazakhstan," Shumenov responded. "Let's fight in Las Vegas where all the champions fight."

Chris Cozzone

MATCH STATS

	Beibut Shumenov	Danny Santiago
Division: Light Heavyweight	**Age:** 27	**Age:** 38
Location: Las Vegas, NV	**Weight:** 175	**Weight:** 173
Date: July 29, 2011	**Residence:** Las Vegas, NV	**Residence:** Ocala, FL
Television: Telefutura	**Birthplace:** Shymkent, Kazakhstan	**Birthplace:** Bronx, NY
Promoter: KZ Event Productions, Golden Boy Promotions, Don Chargin	**Record:** 12-1 (8)	**Record:** 31-5-1 (19)
Referee: Tony Weeks (USA)	**Ring Ranking:** 8	

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REX LAYNE
The Kid From Utah

COVER STORY: "The Right Layne," by Nat Loubet focuses on heavyweight challenger Rex Layne after his knockout victory over Bob Satterfield. The story delves into Layne's history and his rising status after three-straight victories at Madison Square Garden that included Satterfield, Jersey Joe Walcott, and Cesar Brion. Some sportswriters of the time criticized Layne's manager, Marvin Jensen, a dapper chap who raised minks, that Layne was being rushed for Walcott, Brion, and Satterfield. "He's being fed to the lions has been the cry," writes Loubet. "But Layne has defeated all three, and by so doing, he is now in a spot to demand recognition as a top challenger. After all, success is what counts, and Layne has come through with victories. His T.N.T sock and courage have done that for him. Critics assert that Jensen has not had the experience in the pro league. Yes, he's developed a bevy of amateurs, but the manager of a big-time professional is different has been the butt of the criticism." Former world champions Jack Dempsey and Gene Tunney saw Layne splatter Satterfield, but they both saw gaping flaws in Layne, especially defensively. Satterfield had knocked down Layne in the opening round before the 22-year-old from Lewiston, Utah, recovered to vanquish Satterfield. Loubet noted that Layne, "was still green and needed much seasoning in the technique of boxing." Three fights later, Layne went on to avenge his one loss, a 10-round decision to Dave Whitlock in March 1950, with a rousing fourth-round kayo. Two fights later, Layne was a 9-to-5 favorite against an up-and-comer who could punch a little himself, Rocky Marciano. "The Brockton Blockbuster" nailed Layne with a right to the temple, and Layne was counted out in the sixth round. Layne never did fight for the heavyweight title though he did grab a 10-round decision over Ezzard Charles in August 1952. Eight months later, Charles knocked Layne down three times en route to a unanimous decision win. Layne ended his career as a journeyman, dropping six of his last seven fights and closing his career with a 50-17-3 (34) record. He died on his birthday, June 7, 2000, at the age of 72.

"Walcott Upsets Joe Louis' Plans: Jersey Joe Loses Return Bout With Ezzard Charles But Gains Prestige—Champ's Cauliflower Ear Causes Cancellation Of April Bout with Brown Bomber" by RING Editor-in-Chief Nat Fleischer examines the scare Walcott put into heavyweight world champion Charles. The pundits were expecting Walcott to fold. He didn't. "Instead of the fight being his swan song, as most critics had predicted, it added to his prestige and placed him again firmly in the field of contenders," Fleischer writes. "The plaudits that usually go to the victor went to Walcott, the loser, so pleased were the spectators with his showing." Walcott rose from a ninth-round knockdown and put Charles in serious trouble, and his cauliflower ear began to swell, putting a hold on Charles' eighth title defense, scheduled for April. Four months later, Walcott beat Charles in a rematch to win the heavyweight championship.

"Handicapped, They Made the Grade" by Barney Nagler recalls deaf fighters who overcame odds to become professionals after watching Eugene 'Dummy" Hairston, a fast-climbing middleweight from the Bronx, New York. "He couldn't speak, so he put his words into punches," writes Nagler. It was because of Hairston that Madison Square Garden instituted flashing red lights on the corner posts to signal the end of rounds.

WORLD CHAMPIONS

For the period ended March 15, 1951

Heavyweight
Ezzard Charles

Light Heavyweight
Joey Maxim

Middleweight
Ray Robinson

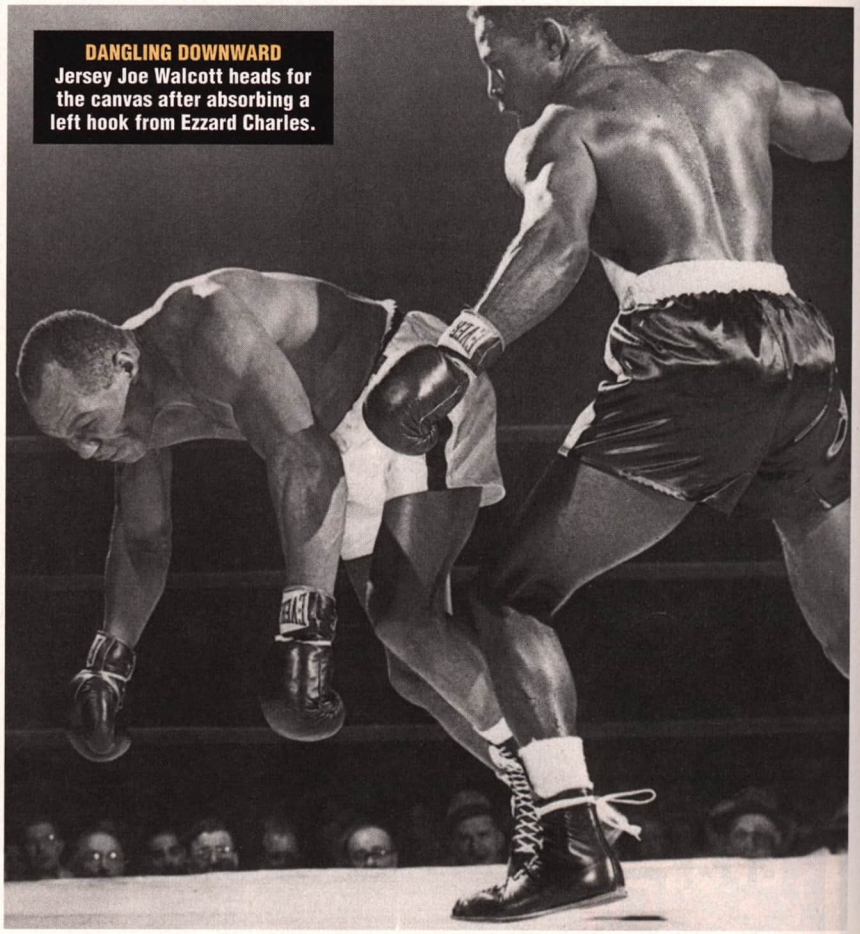
Welterweight
Vacant

Lightweight
Ike Williams

Featherweight
Sandy Saddler

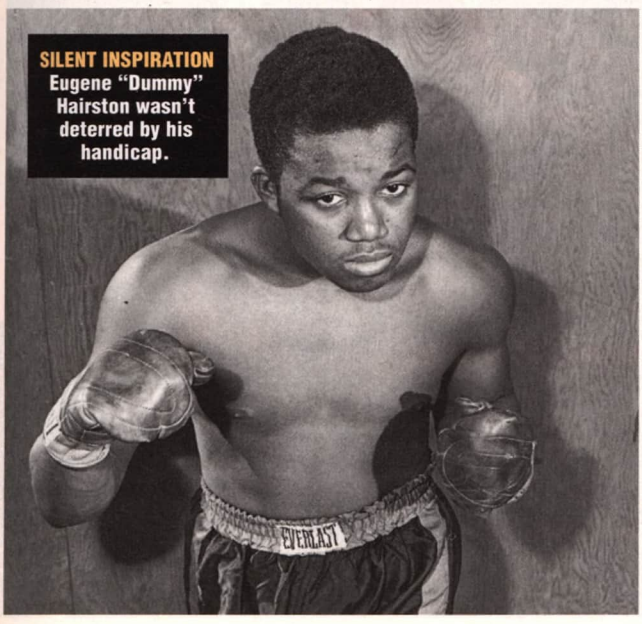
Bantamweight
Vic Toweel

Flyweight
Dado Marino



DANGLING DOWNWARD
Jersey Joe Walcott heads for the canvas after absorbing a left hook from Ezzard Charles.

ROPING WALKER
Louis sent Walker reeling against the ropes in winning a 10th-round TKO.



SILENT INSPIRATION
Eugene "Dummy" Hairston wasn't deterred by his handicap.

"To Dad Goes The Credit: Harry Matthews Says He Learned The Rudiments Of Boxing From His Father" by W.C. Heinz, one of the true grandmasters of sportswriting, recounts how light heavyweight Harry Matthews developed his craft. "It started in a place called Ola, Idaho, running on the road in the morning with the neighbors thinking he was crazy, and punching the bag in the parlor in the afternoon or early evening" writes Heinz. Matthews worked his way up the light heavyweight ranks but never got a shot at the title, instead meeting and getting destroyed the following year in two rounds by Marciano in a heavyweight title eliminator.

"In Sunny California" by Harry Winkler gives fans a glimpse of the fading Joe Louis, who took on California heavyweight champ Andy Walker at San Francisco's Cow Palace. "Frisco fans know their boxing, and they were not under the impression that Louis is the fighter he once was, nor are they under the impression that Walker is a great fighter," Winkler writes. Louis won by 10th-round stoppage. Unfortunately, "The Brown Bomber" never got out of 1951. Louis had just five more fights, all inside '51, finally getting stopped by Marciano in the eighth round in October of that year. ■

AMATEUR NEWS & VIEWS

By Michael Rivest

US OLYMPIC TEAM TRIALS WINNERS

Mobile Civic Center • Mobile, Alabama • August 2011

108 pounds: Erros Correa, San Jose, CA,
114 pounds: Rau'shee Warren, Cincinnati, OH
123 pounds: Joseph Diaz Jr., El Monte, CA
132 pounds: Jose Ramirez, Avenal, CA
141 pounds: Jamel Herring, Coram, NY
152 pounds: Errol Spence, Desoto, TX
165 pounds: Jesse Hart, Philadelphia, PA
178 pounds: Marcus Browne, Staten Island, NY
201 pounds: Michael Hunter, Las Vegas, NV
201+ pounds: Lenroy Thompson, Lenexa, KS

Jose Ramirez ... Promise Keeper

"For the love of God, go for the money!" said Cenk Uygur, host of *The Young Turks*, the largest online news show in the world. He and co-host Ana Kasparian were scoffing at Jose Ramirez' decision to put a pro career on hold while he honors a promise to his father to be the first in his family to go to college.

"Go pro! Make the money!" argued an equally disbelieving Kasparian.

"He's planning on going to a local college, grind his way through," continued Uygur. "After you make your millions, you could go to Harvard. You can be the first boxer ever to graduate from college."

Ouch!

No worries, Cenk and Ana. We forgive you. But what you don't know about fighters is a lot, and what you don't know about Jose Ramirez is, well, everything.

But we can guess where you got your ideas about his marketability. Ramirez has nine national championships. Then there's his come-from-behind victory over Raynell Williams at the 2011 US Olympic Trials, not to mention the fact that he's broken amateur records held by Shane Mosley, Floyd Mayweather, and Oscar De La Hoya.

At 132 pounds, the 19-year-old from Avenal, California, already has 130 amateur bouts. His losses, barely discernible now in his rearview mirror, can be counted on one hand.

At 5'10", Ramirez makes you think of a certain former champion who once had those same dimensions as an amateur. "Oh, he's a great fighter," said former IBF and WBA junior middleweight titleholder Fernando Vargas. "He'll be the best someday, you watch."

Robert Garcia, who trains such notable pros as Brandon Rios and Nonito Donaire, agrees. "He's got all the skills right now. I

OLYMPIC TRIALS Ramirez (left) trades right hands with Raynell Williams

PHOTO BY SCOTT FOSTER/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

MORE THAN A TRAINER

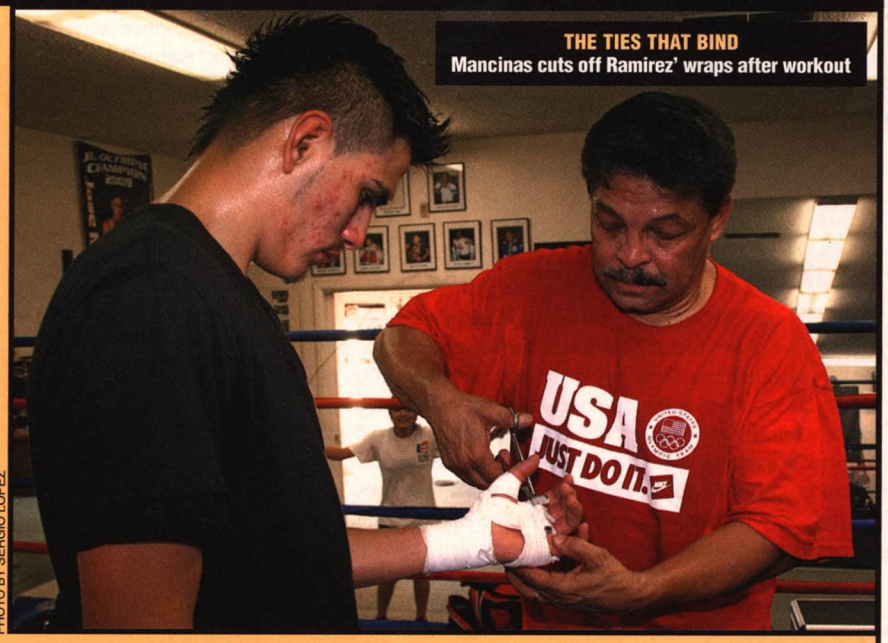
Armando Mancinas remembers the first day eight-year-old Jose Ramirez walked into the Avenal's Kings Boxing Club.

"He hit the double-end ball, and it came back and hit him in the face," he said with the lightheartedness of one who knows his own story's end. "Four months later, I found out that Jose doesn't take defeat very well. He came back and practiced until he mastered it. Now he works the double-end ball better than most professionals."

When Ramirez was 12, Mancinas made him a promise. "He told me he wanted to be in the Olympics. I said, 'If you really mean it, I promise to get you there.'"

Mancinas, a former All-Army standout and once an Olympic hopeful himself, has been Ramirez' trainer since the beginning. Bonds develop between boxers and trainers that few understand. The two became like family, and then family for real when Mancinas became *padrino* (godfather) to Ramirez, a role he took very seriously.

In fact, Mancinas believes destiny brought the two together. "I've had more than one brush with death and figured the good Lord was keeping me here for a reason," he said.



THE TIES THAT BIND
Mancinas cuts off Ramirez' wraps after workout

PHOTO BY SERGIO LOPEZ

Two of those close calls were accidents that could be written off as luck, but the third will give you chills.

Mancinas had decided to leave the Army in 1977 and let go of his Olympic dream, so his teammates headed for a tune-up event without him. Their plane crashed en route to Poland, killing all aboard.

A monument in honor of the team stands outside the US Olympic Training Center that Mancinas and Ramirez now always walk past, en route to the fulfillment of the promise.

think he'll be an even better pro than an amateur."

What the *Young Turks* missed is that Ramirez is so much more than 132 pounds in the ring.

"He's the perfect kid," said business manager and consultant, Rick Mirigian, "and is so devoted to his family and community. He's like a throwback to another time."

Yes, a time when success was measured in ways beyond simply wealth and fame.

"I promised my father I would do certain things," said Ramirez. "It's not that money isn't important, and besides, it's not an either-or situation. The money's coming." (More about that later.)

The Ramirez family is not blind to how money would improve their lives. Jose's dad, Carlos Ramirez, has worked the fields around Avenal his whole life. Juanita Ramirez, partially disabled since a car accident while she was pregnant with Jose, has stayed at home to raise him and his three siblings.

"We've worked hard," said Dad with Jose interpreting. "But God has always given us what we need."

If that's true, then their son must feel like an instrument of divine will. "The first thing I'll do is see that my parents never have to work again," Ramirez said. "God is in charge."

While waiting for that destiny, he does his part to keep things afloat. After the daily two-hour drive to and from Fresno State University and before his evening gym time, he works at Starbucks.

Uygur and Kasparian also know nothing of what education means in the Ramirez home. The promise Jose made to his Dad about college was grounded in the belief that a field-worker's son can realize all aspects of the American Dream, not just the estate behind a gilded fence.

The promise has to do with the liberating power of knowledge, understanding, awareness, wisdom, and the kind of respect money doesn't buy.

Ramirez is majoring in business. After his boxing life, he wants to use what he's learned to start charitable foundations and open a community center in Avenal. "It'll be a place where kids can come," he said, "with a gym and games. It'll be good for the community."

"Jose is central to Avenal," said Mayor Harlan Casida. "He represents who we are so well that we made him Avenal's Favorite Son. He's all about respect and honoring his commitments. You hear about famous people who never forget where they came from? Well, that will be Jose—always."

What would Margaret Drummond, Principal of Avenal High School, where Ramirez graduated salutatorian, say to him if were he standing in front of her? The two-word answer came immediately: "Don't change. And we'll never change our feelings toward Jose. Win or lose, he'll always be our favorite son."

One more thing, *Young Turks*, about the money, Ramirez is no hayseed. Despite what you may think of boxers, the business major knows what he's doing.

"People have the wrong idea what boxers make in the beginning," he said. "Then you also have to be lucky and stay healthy. The difference between signing now and after next year's Olympics is big, financially."

"The right people are interested in Jose," said Mirigian. "His marketability as a former Olympian will be exponentially higher than it is now. He's making the right move from a financial perspective."

The difference is often measured in seven figure numbers.

So you're wrong, Cenk and Ana. And one last thing, Ramirez won't be the first boxer to graduate from college, although he could someday wind up among the wealthiest—maybe financially, but surely in the other ways that matter. ■

By Chris Richards

Knockout Artist Anne Sophie Mathis

Mike Tyson is Anne Sophie Mathis' favorite fighter. She has admired his power and timing since she first let boxing into her life. Looking at the numbers makes it easy to see her hero's influence on her career. Her knockout ratio of 84 percent is particularly impressive in the time-compressed world of women's boxing. Anne Sophie does not fight to win rounds—she goes into the ring looking for a knockout every time.

It's not hard to understand the other reasons that Tyson's story might appeal to Mathis. The prime Tyson was a disturbed young man, angry at the world, who channeled his rage inside the ring. Her birthplace of Nancy, France, is a long way from Brooklyn, but Anne Sophie's own childhood was not easy. She lost her father at the age of 13. The experience was devastating. She had never been attracted to the sport before, but boxing presented itself at the time she needed an emotional anchor. "I was a disturbed and impulsive child," she said. "Boxing came into my life and helped me to overcome this tragic event."

Mathis, 24-1 (21), has done more than find personal solace. She built a career filled with success and accolades. Her sole loss came in just her second professional fight, and she has done nothing but win since. Those victories included a European championship and three alphabet titles at 140 pounds before moving up to welterweight and winning two more alphabet belts. Anne Sophie has proved herself one of the best female fighters in Europe and is arguably France's top fighter, regardless of gender.

Mathis is not looking to coast on her success. Rather than continue to rack up knockouts in Europe, she is looking to mix it up with one of the finest female fighters in the world. On December 2, she is scheduled to face Holly Holm in a fight that actually comes very close to deserving its grandiose billing as "World Dominance." Having never fought outside of Europe and speaking no English, she will be traveling to Holm's hometown of Albuquerque, New Mexico. It's difficult to see Anne Sophie winning a decision in such a venue, but she refuses to consider herself an underdog. She has no plans to allow the

HONING IN ON HOLM
Mathis is intent on knocking out Holly

PHOTO BY STEVE SNOWDEN/GETTY IMAGES

judges to decide the winner. Stopping the talented, athletic, and polished Holm is a tall order, but Mathis is determined to do it. "I have to win before the final bell," she said. "I will fight for a kayo."

The fight, or at least its significance, was briefly threatened by events beyond Anne Mathis' control. On July 7, Sauerland Event announced that welterweight multi-titlist Cecilia Braekhus would face Holm in Europe "sometime in September or October." Mathis professed confidence in the solidity of her contract with Holm, but a Braekhus win might have derailed the whole thing. It would have at least rendered "World Dominance" anticlimactic. Fortunately for Mathis, Sauerland and Holm promoter Lenny Fresquez were unable to agree on terms.

While purists and hardcore fans might rightly say that Braekhus-Holm would have been a more significant fight, the hard-hitting Mathis is a much more aesthetically appealing stylistic match for Holm. Delivering the knockout would put Mathis in an excellent position to land an equally appealing European superfight with the German-based Norwegian, and she wants it. "My agent, Christel Aujoux, has already contacted Braekhus's team," she said. "Fighting her is my next goal after beating Holly Holm."

If Mathis follows through on the talk, women's boxing may have a new international superstar. Mathis may lack Holly Holm's homegrown appeal to Middle America. Not speaking English gives her a disadvantage Cecilia Braekhus doesn't have to face. But Anne Sophie brings the big punch to the table, and knockout artists speak boxing's international language. There is no better way to communicate with fans.

Mucino Needs A Challenge

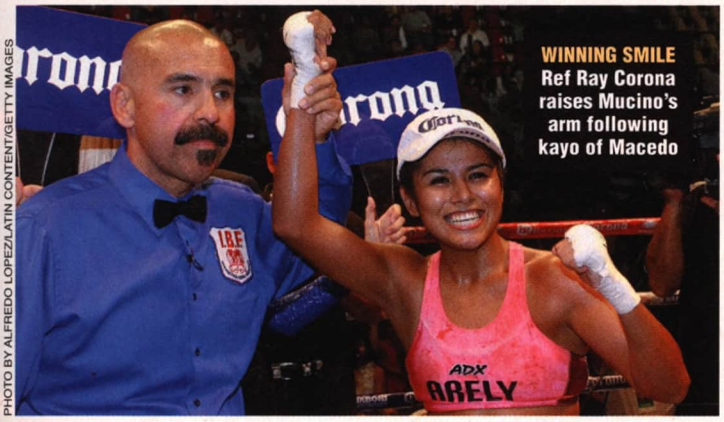


PHOTO BY ALFREDO LOPEZ/LATIN CONTENT/GETTY IMAGES

WINNING SMILE Ref Ray Corona raises Mucino's arm following kayo of Macedo

Flyweight alphabet titlist Arely Mucino would like to join Ana Maria Torres and Jackie Nava at the top. The Monterrey native fights for Torres' promoter, Hector Garcia, and she has already caught a wave of fan support that just might carry her to superstardom. She needs more meaningful fights to close the deal.

Mucino, 13-0-1 (8) with 1 no-contest, opened 2011 year by stopping American Chantel Cordova to win an alphabet title. Two successful defenses have followed, and a third is scheduled. Unfortunately, not all title fights are equal. Mucino's most recent victim, Soledad Macedo, hasn't beaten an opponent with a winning record since her pro debut. Carolina Alvarez, who Mucino beat in March, was coming off a January knockout but was only fighting for the third time since 2007! Such challengers are not the bricks upon which the monuments of greatness are built.

"Ametralladora" has the talent to succeed. She proved that in a brief but exciting war with Susi Kentikian last August, before a deep cut in Kentikian's scalp ended the battle in disappointment for everyone involved. Perhaps the no-contest with the Hamburg-based Armenian multi-titlist scared off potential opponents.

That would be a shame. Mucino certainly needs and deserves another real fight. ■

Chris Richards can be contacted at chris.m.richards@gmail.com.

WILL TORRES-NAVA II LEAD TO NUMBER THREE?

When Ana Maria Torres, 26-3-3 (15), fought Jackie Nava on April 23, she appeared to do slightly better in a close fight. The judges didn't agree, and the result was a disputed draw. When the two Mexican stars met for their July 30 rematch, their country was watching. According to the official ratings, more than 13 million viewers tuned into TV Azteca's broadcast of the fight. The Mexican fans didn't see the fight as a novelty. To them, it was a legitimate superfight.

The action did not disappoint. Nava, 24-4-3 (11), boxed well defensively throughout the fight, and her offense came in quick bursts of combination punching. "The Aztec Princess" bloodied Torres' nose in round three, and her exciting flurries impressed the TV Azteca broadcast team. Her rival applied subtle but heavy-handed pressure from the first bell and kicked into high gear for the championship rounds. "La Guerrera" rocked Nava at the end of the fourth and turned her face into a bloody mask in the ninth. Torres scored an apparent knockdown early in the 10th that was ruled a slip. The judges favored Ana Maria's pressure and her late rally, awarding her a unanimous decision by triple scores of 95-93.

The final result was not without controversy. The TV Azteca broadcast team scored the contest a draw. Their view clearly colored much of the postfight media coverage. Yet the fact remains that Torres is as good in the championship rounds as anyone in boxing. She won on guts, toughness, and hard punching. While Nava was not as consistently effective, the controversy is a credit to her skill, stamina, and courage. Nonetheless, her exciting flurries were just not enough.

The Mexican boxing establishment deserves a great deal of credit for the success of Torres-Nava II. Male fighters, trainers, promoters, and television executives have been remarkably supportive of women's boxing., so have fight fans of both sexes. The result is two amazing fights between two superb fighters and TV numbers worthy of the shows.

All controversy aside, this was a huge win for Ana Maria Torres. It establishes her as the woman to beat in Mexican boxing. Even the controversy is not entirely bad. If it leads to another fight between two of the most entertaining fighters in the sport, it will be worth it.

TORRES TRIUMPHANT
"La Guerrera" edged Nava in sizzling rematch

PHOTO BY GERARDO ZAVALA/LATIN CONTENT/GETTY IMAGES

By Gavin Evans

PHOTO BY CHRIS BRUNSKILL/GETTY IMAGES

Welterweight Kell Brook

When you show a bit of promise, a touch of pizzazz, and a splash of arrogance, and you hail from Brendan Ingle's famous Sheffield gym, then it's inevitable you'll be dubbed "The New Naseem Hamed." The latest to assume this mantle is the elusive and hard-hitting 24-0 (16) Kell Brook, although the powerfully built, 5'9" welterweight is a more orthodox, less flamboyant boxer than his former stablemate.

Britain's boxing writers voted Brook "Prospect of the Year" in 2009, but it is only now that he is making his move. Previously managed and promoted by Frank Warren, he switched to Barry and Eddie Hearn's Matchroom promotional stable after declaring himself dissatisfied with the speed and direction of his progress. He is now self-managed, with his stepfather, Terry Dooley, playing an advisory role. Warren, incidentally, countered by saying he'd done all he could for Brook and that Dooley's role was detrimental to progress.

Kell's first fight under his new promoters was against the hard-headed Lovemore N'dou—an opponent his trainer, Dominic Ingle, had recommended. Brook passed the test well, winning 11 of the 12 rounds. "Kell needed the full 12, and we knew what N'dou was like because Junior Witter fought him in 2005. He's slipped a bit since then, but I thought Kell did a better job on him than Saul Alvarez. He needs another two or three opponents at that level or better and then he'll be ready to win a world title."

As a child, Ezekiel "Kell" Brook was a rather chubby but high-energy tearaway who modeled himself on his cinematic hero, Bruce Lee, and was regularly up for a scrap (although he insists he was never a bully). In the mid-1990s, Brendan Ingle was widely regarded as Britain's leading trainer, having just taken Hamed to the WBO featherweight title, so Terry steered the nine-year-old in the direction of the Ingle's Wincobank gym.

Brook quickly absorbed the switch-hitting defensive style first displayed by Herol Graham and later used by Hamed, Ryan Rhodes, Johnny Nelson, and Witter. Ingle seldom missed the chance to tell visitors to the gym about the extraordinary power of the youngster. Between the ages of 12 and 18, he picked up two national junior amateur titles and two national Boys Club titles and, as a 17-year-old junior, won a gold medal at the Four Nations tournament. Along the way, he had several sparring sessions with Amir Khan (both men insist they got the better of the other).

When Brook turned professional in '04 at the age of 18, Ingle was effusive. "He's got the lot," he insisted. "He's cool in a fight, he's got timing and judges distance brilliantly. He's got coordination, mobility, flexibility, agility, accuracy, and rhythm." But a year later Brook (then an 8-0 junior welterweight) broke with Ingle and signed with Warren (who had fallen out with the Ingles). After which, he defected to a rival Sheffield gym run by a former Ingle protégé, Dave Coldwell. The Ingles regarded this as a betrayal, but Brook regarded it as no more than a savvy career move.

He fought against a series of low-grade opponents until being offered a shot at the vacant British title, which he won through an impressive seventh-round stoppage over the 15-1 Barrie Jones in June '08.

Later that year, however, he had another upheaval. Coldwell joined David Haye's promotional team, which meant he was a direct rival to Warren. Brook had no option but to leave, and he chose to return to the Ingles. "Maybe it was a bit tense at first," he concedes. "But, on the other hand, they were like family, and the boxers there were patting me on the back and saying, 'Kell's back.' And I soon fit in again."

However, in his three years away, he'd lost some of the Spartan self-discipline the Ingles insisted on and had taken to the party circuit. "I was cutting corners in training, letting my weight rise between fights, and hanging out in the wrong places," he admits. Now and then, he would find himself in scrapes—including being stabbed in '07. "You would get people who had a few beers saying to their mates, 'He's not too big—I could have him.' And, of course, the right thing to do is just to walk away, but I was younger then."

While he quickly adjusted back to the Ingle's training methods, it took him a while longer to cut out the nightlife. The turning point came in May last year when he had an altercation with a nightclub manager, whom he was alleged to have punched. He was convicted for assault and served with a curfew order although it was overturned on appeal.

After that, he settled down and says he seldom goes out at night. "It took him a while to return to our way of thinking, but he's definitely back to the straight and narrow," says Dominic Ingle. "He's far more mature now, and he knows he's got to be focused."

To which Brook adds: "Yes, I'm much more grounded. I live with my parents, but I'm around at my girlfriend Lindsey's house a lot. And everything works like a jigsaw. I'm in the gym almost every day, and, between my father and Eddie Hearn, who I speak to nearly every day, and Dominic Ingle, we have a very tight team. I'm definitely more mature."

After raking up five impressive, inside-the-distance British title wins, including a cut-eye victory over former fringe contender Michael Jennings, he vacated the national title and was made the number-one contender by the Warren-friendly WBO. But when he split with Warren, the WBO's enthusiasm diminished, and he was demoted and stripped of his meaningless WBO "intercontinental" title. Hearn will look for other title options.

Brook has impressive power in both fists and a fine jab, and he relies less exclusively on his sharp reflexes than some of the Ingle's past stars, doing plenty of blocking and parrying from a relatively high guard. He has barely lost a round in his 24 professional fights, and, until N'dou lasted the distance, he'd won seven in a row inside the distance, including a few spectacular stoppages. But there's a big gap between beating the likes of N'dou and Jennings or sparring with the 37-year-old Witter and taking on genuine contenders like Mike Jones (a name that regularly crops up when future opponents are discussed).

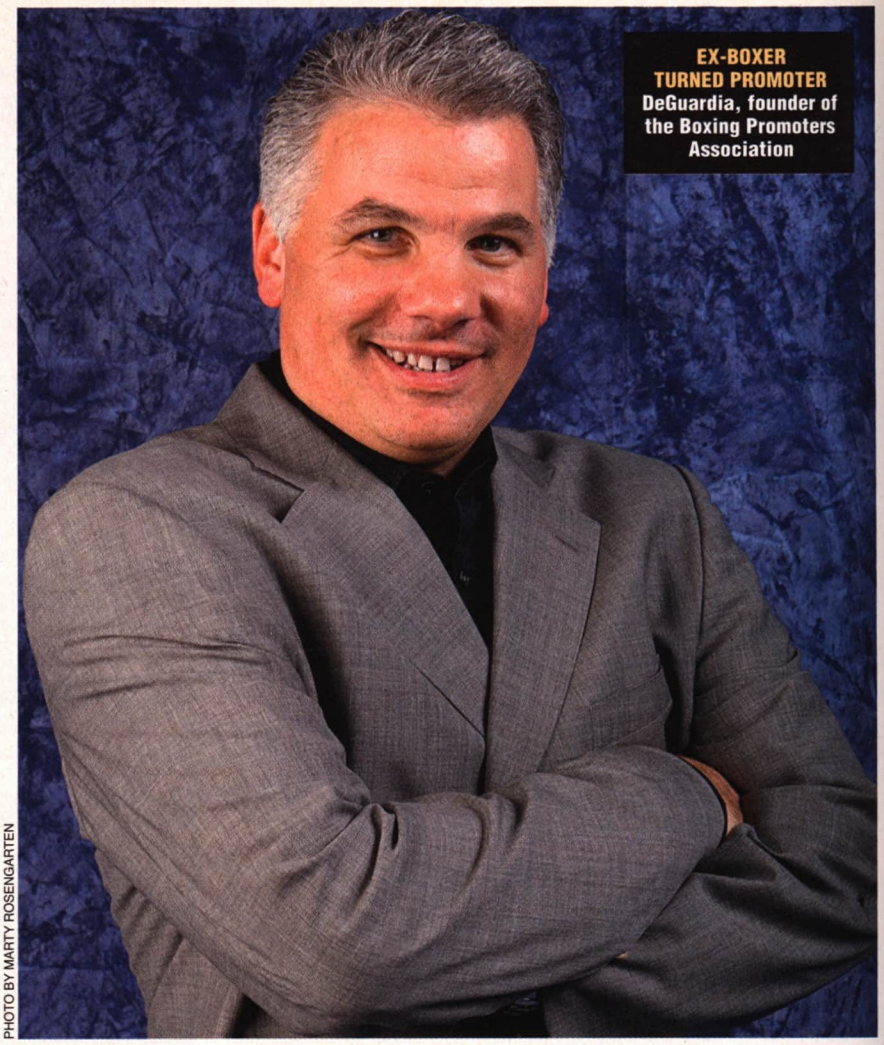
Still, Brook, who will fight again in October, insists he's "ready right now" for his division's elite. "I want to be involved in the big fights, and I wouldn't hesitate to take on any of the welterweight title holders right now, including Manny Pacquiao. But the fight I would really love would be against Khan, who is growing out of light welterweight. That would be a megafight in the UK, and I would be very confident of stopping him. People talk about Khan's speed, but it's all about timing—timing beats speed, and I have the timing and the power to knock Khan out." ■

PRO RECORD

2004		
Sept. 17	Peter Buckley, Sheffield, England	W 6
Oct. 29	Andy Cosnett, Worksop, England	KO 1
Nov. 9	Leeroy Williamson, Leeds, England	KO 2
Dec. 10	Brian Coleman, Sheffield	KO 1
Dec. 19	Karl Taylor, Bolton, England	W 6
2005		
March 4	Lee Handley, Rotherham, England	W 6
May 15	Ernie Smith, Sheffield	W 6
July 9	Jonathan Whiteman, Nottingham, England	KO 2
Sept. 10	Ernie Smith, Cardiff, Wales	W 4
2006		
April 29	Ernie Smith, Edinburgh, Scotland	W 6
June 1	Geraint Harvey, Yorkshire, England	KO 3
Oct. 14	Duncan Cottier, Manchester, England	KO 3
Dec. 9	David Kirk, London, England	KO 1
2007		
April 7	Karl David, Cardiff	KO 3
Oct. 6	Aleksei Stoda, Nottingham	W 6
2008		
March 22	Darren Gethin, Cardiff	KO 3
June 14	Barrie Jones, London	KO 7
Nov. 14	Kevin McIntyre, Glasgow, Scotland	KO 1
2009		
Jan. 30	Stuart Elwell, London	KO 2
July 18	Michael Lomax, Manchester	KO 3
2010		
March 12	Krzysztof Bienias, Liverpool, England	KO 6
Sept. 18	Michael Jennings, Birmingham, England	KO 5
Dec. 11	Philip Kotey, Liverpool	KO 2
2011		
June 25	Lovemore N'dou, Sheffield	W 12

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
24	24	0	0	16

Can The BPA Help Boxing?



EX-BOXER TURNED PROMOTER DeGuardia, founder of the Boxing Promoters Association

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

The Boxing Promoters Association, founded in 2009 by Star Boxing CEO and President Joe DeGuardia, includes over 39 US promotional companies. A portion of the BPA's mission statement reads, "The purpose of this association shall be to foster and protect the business interests of the members and the well-being of the sport as an industry and in general." Will it benefit the boxers or should it?

DeGuardia understands boxing from many angles. "My father and uncle were fighters," he said. "My earliest memories are boxing. I started in the gym at age six and competed through law school and won the Golden Gloves 147-pound open championship."

With such an accomplished amateur career, DeGuardia received many lucrative offers to continue boxing, but his parents stressed an education. So, he finished college and went to law school. He would have continued to box except for a serious motor vehicle accident in which he was a passenger. At age 23, 2½ years following the injury, he was determined to return to boxing and continued to train. After graduating from law school, he worked in the New York District Attorney's office as a prosecutor for four years before entering private practice. He was frequently asked to legally help boxers and, in 1990, former light heavyweight-turned cruiserweight, Lou Del Valle asked DeGuardia to manage him.

"It soon became clear that the only way to move a fighter was to promote your own shows," said DeGuradia. "For years, I have talked to other promoters. We have a ridiculous business model! Look at the NFL, NBA, and MLB. If an athlete is part of the Giants, they have access to top-level professionals, including doctors. This doesn't exist in boxing. If you can properly organize the industry, then everyone will prosper."

In 2003, former WBA light heavyweight titlist Eddie Mustafa Muhammad founded the Joint Association of Boxers (JAB) to represent professional fighters and negotiate collective bargaining agreements with promoters. The organization had the best intentions and attracted considerable members. Unfortunately, it never advanced despite the backing and support of the Teamsters Union. JAB could have been groundbreaking in establishing boxer pensions, unified medical standards, and better insurance coverage. Although DeGuardia's former boxer persona recognizes the need for a boxer's union, he believes that the BPA can accomplish the same things.

Pennsylvania executive director and former Association of Boxing Commissions president, Greg Sirb, agreed. "I really think there is a need for the BPA given the popularity of mixed martial arts. The big thing is to try to get a 'group-cost' for medicals so that they become affordable to the average fighter. There also needs to be an accident liability insurance program that these fighters can join [at a minimal cost] that would cover them if injured while training or competing."

Recently, the UFC expanded athlete medical insurance coverage to include training injuries.

DeGuardia noted: "We pay tremendous money for insurance premiums. We can expand that based on collective bargaining."

New York-based heavyweight Vinny Maddalone, who is also on the board of Ring 8 (the Veteran Boxers Association of New York) wishes that boxers would have formed a strong union before the promoters but believes that the BPA is headed in the right direction and could help the sport gather momentum like mixed martial arts has done.

"One of the fighters Ring 8 has helped is former world champion Iran Barkley," added Maddalone. "There are too many fighters like Barkley with no money and no health insurance. The main thing is the fighter. I hope this is the BPA's main goal."

The BPA is negotiating reasonable prices for prefight medical testing that will make it affordable to fighters, as well as working with the associations like the ABC and Association of Ring Physicians to establish a medical data bank. In the current system, boxers that compete several times in a calendar year are frequently forced to

A FIGHTER'S PERSPECTIVE
Maddalone thinks the BPA is headed in the right direction

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

repeat medical exams when they travel from one jurisdiction to another. A databank would eliminate redundant testing as well as prevent information from being lost or falsified.

Not everyone has jumped on the BPA bandwagon. Respected boxing attorney Pat English said, "It could further advance uniform standards across the nation for boxing health and safety issues and contract issues. The BPA could serve a useful function in mediation and arbitration disputes." As a result, costly litigation between promoters or between fighters, managers and/or promoters could be eliminated, and the money could be spent elsewhere. "On the other hand, there are antitrust issues," said English, "and they must to be careful to not sink to advocate against regulation, which could be beneficial to many promoters."

Note that antitrust law refers to a body of laws that prohibits anti-competitive behavior—such as a monopoly and unfair business practices that violate standards of ethical behavior.

DeGuardia is proud of a process begun by the BPA with the sanctioning organizations concerning fair judging. He cited the controversial decision that granted Paul Williams a win over Erislandy Lara on July 9 in Atlantic City.

"They did the right thing in New Jersey [by suspending the judges]," he said. "We showed a system to the sanctioning bodies where a judge will not get another assignment without remedial training. You need to show the sport as credible."

One thing near and dear to my heart not yet broached by the BPA is retirement and the practice of a promoter signing a clearly injured fighter. History has taught us that commissions are sometimes the last to pull the trigger on an athlete's career. DeGuardia mentioned the BPA is working on sanctions for promoters that act unethically, so I hope that they develop a mechanism to admonish a less scrupulous promotional entity that takes advantage of a boxer who should no longer compete. It is a clear way the BPA can demonstrate they truly support the athletes that are the sport's lifeblood. ■

HITTING ON THE BREAK

by Jim Bagg

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

ADDICTED TO INK! Pavlik showed up for the Lopez fight sporting a lot of new tattoos

A Pavlikian Response

They say you only get one chance to make a first impression. You also only get one chance to make a last impression. The problem is, you usually don't know until after the fact when that particular chance has arrived.

One topic circulating among the fight fraternity these days is whether Kelly Pavlik just made his final impression, whether he'll disappear—either from championship-level relevance or from boxing altogether—after his latest episode, in which he pulled out of a fight on five-days notice without so much as a scraped knuckle to blame it on. Some have speculated that Pavlik, who recently graduated from Betty Ford University with an advanced degree in "getting ugly tattoos no sober person would pay for," is back on the sauce. Others have suggested that he's just making bad decisions and committing career suicide.

As it so happens, the Baggnifying Glass is a world-renowned expert in boozing, making bad decisions, and screwing up his career. So if you want a comprehensive and deadly accurate analysis of the Kelly Pavlik situation, you've come to the right place. We'll do this question-and-answer style, and because Vinny Baggarino is both asking and answering the questions, it's like staring at J.Lo—you know you're getting quality on both ends.

Question 1: Did alcohol have something to do with Pavlik's decision not to fight?

This is like asking the Baggster if a lack of love from Mama Bagg had something to do with the crappy apartment he currently lives in. Not directly, but certain cataclysmic events in our lives play some role in shaping everything we do afterward. So from now on, everything Pavlik does will be affected by whatever thoughts are running through his brain related to facing an intervention from his family, being shipped off to rehab, drinking his way through training camps, and falling from "blossoming megastar" to "floundering D-list celebrity" in the span of about two years. On some level, that baggage will impact every decision he makes.

But is he off the wagon right now, and that's why he chose not to fight Darryl Cunningham on August 6? The Baggalyzer's alky antennae say no. This didn't feel like a rash, drunken, spur-of-the-moment decision. Pavlik was coherent in the interviews that followed. And, hey, training on Schlitz never stopped him from going through with a fight before.

Question 2: Does Pavlik really think he should be getting more than $50K for a *ShoBox* fight and more than $1.35-million to fight Lucian Bute?

Yes, that's what he really thinks. It doesn't mean he's right, but the guy's gotten spoiled. He's like a washed-up actor who had a Playboy Playmate on each arm 20 years ago and still insists on hitting on the 22-year-old Playmate he can't get instead of settling for the decent-looking, desperate 34-year-old who'd be an easy score. *ShoBox* opened up the budget for Pavlik. He didn't think they opened it up nearly enough. Pavlik cited examples, how he got paid $1.5-million to fight no-hoper Marco Antonio Rubio and $3-million to fight Bernard Hopkins. But he can't compare the present to the past. Beat a guy like Bute, and you can call the shots again. Until then, a $50,000 payday isn't a slap in the face. It's called "market value."

Question 3: Why did it take until fight week for all of these money concerns to become an issue for Pavlik?

The way boxing has always worked is that the promoters and the managers "take care" of all those business-y things the fighters "shouldn't have to concern themselves with," and then the fighters end up broke when their careers are over. Actually, those are the lucky fighters; a lot of them go broke smack dab in the middle of their primes, like Nate Campbell did. The point is: Nobody is going out of their way to explain all the financial details to Pavlik. He has to request those details personally, maybe more than once. He should have found out sooner that he was getting a mere 50 grand to fight Cunningham, but, for whatever reason, he waited a while.

Ultimately, this is on Pavlik. He has no valid excuse for not being proactive about being inactive. If he was going to pull out of the fight, he should have done it a couple of weeks earlier. But if you think the people around him were running around advertising, "Hey, Kelly, we secured you your smallest paycheck in six years!" then you don't know how boxing works. To the guys in the suits, the ignorance of the guys getting hit in the head is bliss.

Question 4: Does Pavlik still want to be a fighter?

He says he does. Then again, Tiger Woods said he was sorry and wanted to be a good family man, when deep down he was thinking, *Oh no, if my wife takes me back, then golf is suddenly going to become the most exciting activity I participate in.* Frankly, the Baggipede doesn't think Pavlik gets much joy out of boxing anymore. He seems physically and emotionally worn down. It feels like he's *willing* to be a fighter under palatable circumstances, but the passion is gone—for now, at least.

Question 5: Where does Pavlik go from here?

First, to the tattoo parlor, since he has some time on his hands and a tiny spot on the underside of his right pinkie toe that is still that same boring old flesh color it's always been. From there, Pavlik's promotional situation needs to be figured out—will he mend fences with Top Rank or wait until he's free to fight for someone else? Whatever the case, he's 29 years old, still a decent fighter (maybe more than decent if he could get busy again and rediscover his rhythm), and still a name everybody knows. But networks aren't going to be excited to sign him up if they aren't confident he'll show up for the opening bell.

So, if Pavlik really is as financially secure as he says, he's going to have to overlook the fact that he's getting short money and fight three or four times in quick succession to prove that he's serious. If he's not willing to take short money, then his only option is probably to go face a stacked deck in Germany or some such place where a promoter is willing to take the Pavlik plunge in order to get the former middleweight champ's name on a fighter's resume.

Ironically, these are precisely the things Pavlik didn't want to do that led to his August pullout. He didn't want to take short money, and he didn't want to go to a foreign country to get "cashed out."

In other words, he thought he was holding out for something better but has only made things worse for himself. It's the classic labor strike that does nothing but cost the workers money; then eventually they go back to work with the same deal they had before, down a few paychecks.

If you're reading this depressing dose of reality, Kelly, the Baggnificence knows what you're thinking: *I could really use a beer.* And, yes, when the Baggvoisier is making fun of your drinking problems and telling you that you screwed up your life, that's when you know something has gone horribly wrong.

And if all this doesn't make Pavlik rethink his approach, maybe he should come spend a weekend at Casa de Bagg, sleeping on the moldy bathroom floor with an empty pizza box for a pillow. Surely that'll scare him straight.

THE MONTHLY MAILBAGG

The Baggman's favorite thing about the Internet? Google-searching "Jim Bagg" and finding hilarious message board posts that call yours truly a "know-it-all cu__" and a "self absorbing pr___." The Baggnificent's least favorite thing about the Internet? E-mails from you illiterate cretins:

Dear Count Baggula,

The photograph of Cecilia Braekhus in the "Sweeter Science" section of the August issue of THE RING was far sexier than any of the photos of the "RING Card Girls" that have been featured thus far. This raises the question: Isn't it time to discard the RING Card Girls altogether, if only so that the legendary Merle Baggard would be granted three more pages to pen his monthly magnum opuses?

Thanks,
Aaron S. Bayley
Toronto, ON

Beetle Bayley,

Ms. Braekhus is definitely worth a linger, but she's not necessarily any hotter than the RING Card Girls. She just happens not to have paid a surgeon for any of her physical features. It's a matter of preference—do you like natural or augmented? The reality is that the Baggalamadingdong is in no position to kick any of them out of bed.

As for making room for three additional pages of "Hitting On The Break," haven't you ever heard the phrase "too much of a good thing?" Seven pages of Bagg every month instead of four would cause readers' brains to explode with elation, and that wouldn't be good for business.

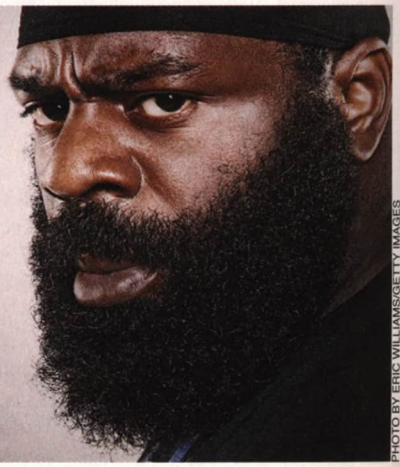
BEAUTIFUL BRAEKHUS
She can fight too!

PHOTO BY MARTIN ROSE/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Pugilism And Pizza

At the Baggeroni's local pie joint—no, not the strip club, get your head out of the gutter—they sell individual slices of a special meat-lover's pizza. It looks absolutely awesome. You move it close to your mouth and you tingle with excitement. But then you take a bite, and it tastes awful. Looks great, but turns out to be no good at all.

They call it the "Kimbo Slice."



UNSAVORY SLICE
Looks can be deceiving

PHOTO BY ERIC WILLIAMS/GETTY IMAGES

UNLUCKY IRISHMAN
Macklin will probably have to return to Germany for Sturm rematch

PHOTO BY ALEX GRIMM/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Dear Sir Bagg,

Does Felix Sturm know the German word for "hypocrite"? I am sure you all remember a few years ago when Sturm shouted how he was robbed in a hometown decision against Oscar to keep his fight with B-Hop alive. Now a few years ahead, he seems to love hometown robberies as Irish boxer Matthew Macklin hands him his ass and gets robbed in a split decision that leaves Sturm with his trinket. In fact, Old Baggy, ask Felix what is German for "hang your head in shame."

Mark Whelan
Cork, Ireland

Marky Boy,

What a shocker, a fan from the Emerald Isle sides with Macklin! In this case, though, no Irish bias is needed. Your boy did indeed get robbed. But what do you want outta Sturm? Is he supposed to say the judges got it wrong and give Macklin his belt? Sturm isn't a hypocrite. He's just a not-quite-elite fighter who knows he needs the advantage of fighting at home if he's going to keep winning. Since the De La Hoya fight, Sturm has had 18 bouts. Seventeen of them were in Germany, and the other one was in Croatia, the land of Sturm's heritage. If Macklin wants another crack, it'll have to come on Sturm's turf. And if he wants to win, he'd better figure out how to knock Sturm out.

And The Stingray Goes To ...

One of the two journeymen who went to Australia in August and scored a huge upset knockout—the Baggmeister just isn't sure which one to give the Stingray to. Let's talk it out and try to come up with a winner.

Behind door number one is Ameth Diaz, a Panamanian who came in at 29-10 (20) to face the 25-1 (17) Lenny Zappavigna and scored two knockdowns on his way to a fifth-round knockout win. Behind door number two is Jack Asis, a Filipino who was 24-18-4 (13) before facing the 23-2 (8) Nestor Rocha and forcing the towel to flutter in during the second round.

On the one hand, Rocha had been kayoed in one round just a few fights earlier, so Diaz beat the better guy. On the other hand, Asis' record is really, really ugly, whereas Diaz' record is only garden-variety ugly. Then again, Asis is from the Philippines, and the Baggpremacist is tired of watching Filipino fighters win everything. But working in Asis' favor is the fact that he was riding a six-fight winless streak from '09 to early-'11 before turning it around with three wins over favored competition in the past few months.

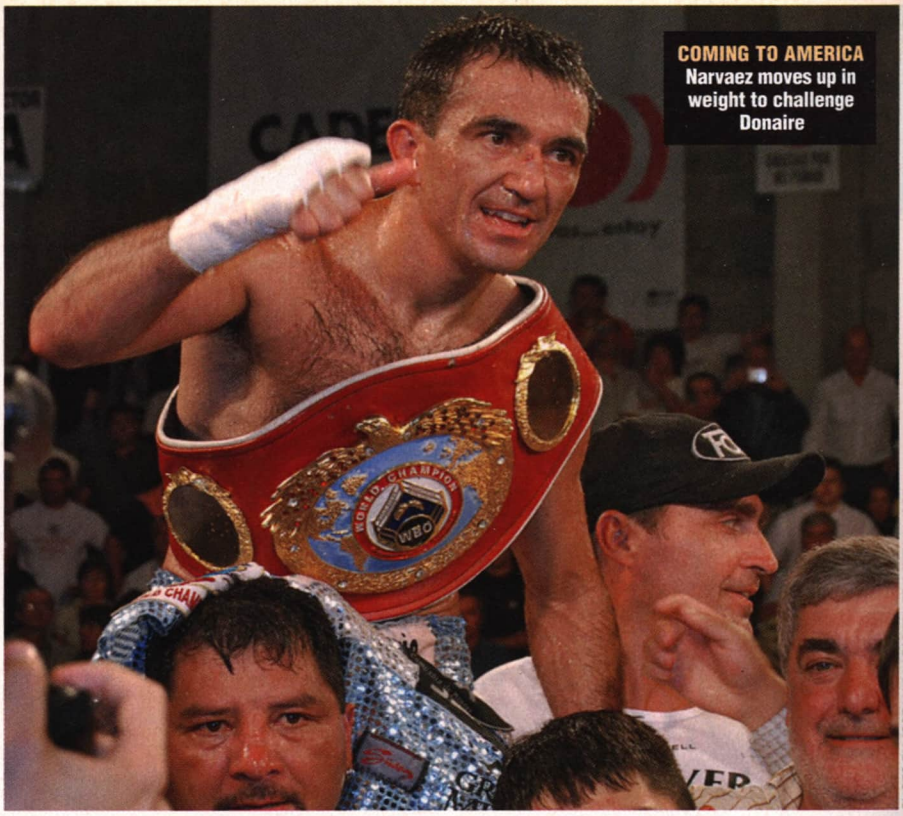
In the end, the tiebreaker has to be the name "Asis." The Baggarooney has always been an Asis man. And not just that, but the guy's name is *Jack* Asis. You go through life getting called that, you deserve a Stingray for your troubles. ■

Jim Bagg can be reached at Baggmeister@yahoo.com.

LOOKING AHEAD

By Lee Groves

Argentina's Narvaez Next For Nonito



COMING TO AMERICA
Narvaez moves up in weight to challenge Donaire

Nonito Donaire's electrifying knockout of **Fernando Montiel** generated gigawatts of momentum for "The Filipino Flash." He rocketed up many pound-for-pound lists, became a partially unified titlist, and had fans and media anticipating his next move.

A nasty tug-of-war between Top Rank and Golden Boy for Donaire's services scuttled a potential May 28 HBO appearance, but, after Top Rank won in arbitration and inked a multi-year extension, Donaire's next assignment was revealed—undefeated super flyweight titlist **Omar Narvaez**. The HBO-televised fight is set October 22 in the US, potentially Las Vegas.

Narvaez, 35-0-2 (19), is unknown in America, but, in Argentina, the 5'3" southpaw is fistic royalty. He held an alphabet flyweight title for nearly seven years (July 2002-June 2009) and 16 defenses, most notably against future titlists **Luiz Lazarte and Carlos Tamara**, Frenchmen **Brahim Asloum** and **Bernard Inom** in France, and then-undefeated American **Rayonta Whitfield**.

After decisioning **Omar Soto**, Narvaez vacated and moved to 115, outpointing **Everth Briceno** to capture a vacant alphabet belt in May 2010. He notched three defenses against **Victor Zaleta**, **Cesar Seda**, and **William Urina**—all by decision in Buenos Aires.

Even at 36, Narvaez banks on mobility, defense, stamina, and quick hands to stockpile rounds. His last blemish was an August 2003 draw against Italian **Andrea Sarritzu** in Italy, and he has since won 21 straight.

Still, the Donaire fight represents the biggest risk of Narvaez' career: It is his first fight in the US, his first at 118, and his first against a genuine pound-for-pound talent. Narvaez welcomed the challenge.

"This is the kind of fight I've been waiting for: With a big champion and in an important place," Narvaez told Argentine newspaper *Ole*. "Nonito is the best in his weight and is a tremendous challenge for me, but I trust in what I have. If I can put the fight in the long distance, with my rhythm, I have chances to win."

Moreover, Narvaez' historical standing is at stake. If he upsets Donaire it will validate everything he's achieved in his 10-year career, but if Donaire blows him away, it will cast indelible doubt over his merits.

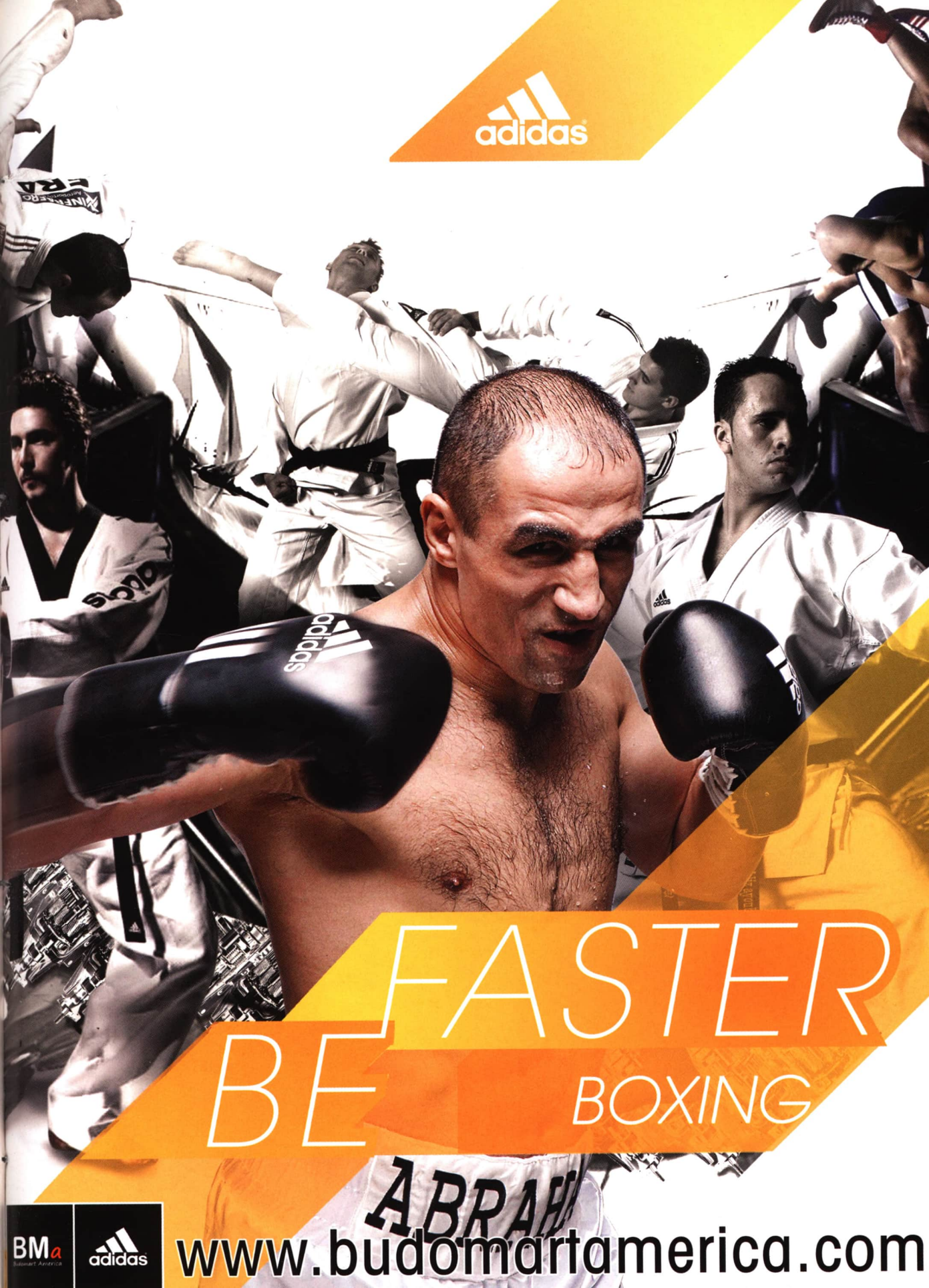
Although this match is intriguing, there are harsh realities. Donaire is four inches taller and eight years younger. Donaire's hands are just as quick, if not more so, and he carries far more power. It should be a high-quality encounter for as long as it lasts, but the Flash's lightning can—and likely will—strike at any moment. ■

LISTEN UP

After **Mikkel Kessler** stopped **Mehdi Bouadla** in June, it was thought the "Viking Warrior" would face super middleweight titlist Lucian Bute. Instead, Kessler's management opted to face **Robert Stieglitz** on November 5 in Copenhagen. Stieglitz, a German-based Russian, has already experienced title-fight success on the road, for he captured the belt in August 2009 by upsetting then-unbeaten Hungarian **Karoly Balzsay** in Budapest (KO 11). Stieglitz' fifth defense may be his toughest, for Kessler is light-years ahead of previous victims **Ruben Acosta**, **Eduard Gutknecht**, **Enrique Ornelas**, and **Khoren Gevor** in terms of name recognition and talent.

World flyweight champion **Pongsaklek Wonjongkam** is scheduled to face ex-alphabet junior flyweight titlist **Edgar Sosa** on October 28 in Thailand. If Wonjongkam prevails, he'll become one of a select few to log 20 successful title defenses in one weight class, joining **Joe Louis**, **Dariusz Michalczewski**, **Ricardo Lopez**, **Joe Calzaghe**, **Abe Attell**, **Sven Ottke**, **Bernard Hopkins**, and **Virgil Hill**—though it should be noted that most of Wonjongkam's defenses were of the alphabet variety.

Kell "Special K" Brook will meet Poland's **Rafal Jackiewicz** in an alphabet welterweight title eliminator October 8 in Brook's hometown of Sheffield. Jackiewicz is best known for his controversial points win over **Delvin Rodriguez** in November 2009 and for being the first man to defeat **Jan Zaveck**. The winner is theoretically slated to face the winner of the August 27 **Zaveck-Andre Berto** bout.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